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A TREATISE CONTAINING THREE THINGS.

Viz.

1. A Discovery of the unsupportable Burthen of Sinne, to a heart that is Saint like sensible of Sin.
2. The restlesse Resolution of a Soule to returne to God, who is Saint-like sensible of his withdrawings.
3. A Discovery of the sweet and unexpected Entertainment that wandring hearts meet with in their returnes to God.

Written by Lieutenant Collonel PAUL HOBSON.

Against thee onely have I sinned, and done this evill in thy sight. Make me to heare joy and gladnesse, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce. Psal. 51. 4. 8.

O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soule thirsteth for thee, my flesh longs for thee in a dry and thirsty Land, where no water is. Psal. 63. 1.

Ephraim my deare Son, is he a pleasant Child? for since I spake against him, I doe earnestly remember him still, therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord. Jer. 31. 20.

London, Printed by M. S. for Tho: Brewster, and are to be sould at his shop at the three Bibles in Pauls Church yard, near the West End. And by William Hutcheson Book-Seller in Durham. 1653.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER; *Unto whose hands these few lines of mine may come, that which I beg of God, both for my selfe, and you (is) That we may both in writing and reading, be made able to understand the Truth from an enjoyment of it selfe. Light is never known till it is injoyed. I am very sensible that my appearing in publike may occasion many strange reasonings in many mens mindes, if I had onely hearkened to that, or to the reasoning of my owne spirit, which did strongly importune my silence, I should not a presented my*

Judgement, and preſent condition to a Publique view, but being by providence, after a large travell and ſtrong encounter with my owne ſpirit, through the diſcoveries of my owne great miſtakes, and alſo through the ſence of the great unſutableneſſe of my owne ſoule to God: I am caſt into theſe parts, where there is not many more Eyes then there is Cenſuring Spirits, condemning the practice of many with whom I meet, to diſcover to each other the daily Experiences that we have of the Fathers dealings with us, and what power we injoy from Heaven, to make an Improvement of thoſe Mercies. We are by many, I ſay, Cenſured as men creeping in private to divulge Untruths, and diſcovering things contrary to Faith in Chriſt, and Holineſſe of Life and Converſation: And whatſoever miſcarriages, and unſutable walkings was of any of us in former times, is brought as an occaſion to cloud our preſent practice, and to render us odious amongſt men, affirming that we dare

not

not divulge that publiquely, which we doe privately vent; which occaſioneth a ſtumbling to many precious hearts, and Cauſes many Scandals and Clouds to be Caſt upon truth, by the gainſayers thereof. Upon which Conſideration, many Friends did deſire me to preſent that in publique which I had delivered in private, which I have here done in the ſame forme and manner as it was there delivered, not being willing to adde any fine ſpunne Expreſſions or quaint diſtinctions, to Court any Mans fancy to minde it, but in the plaine downe-right and humble Expreſſions, as being moſt ſutable to them to whom I ſpeake, and to the preſent Condition and frame of my owne Spirit. God having very much wounded my heart, as for doing things diſhonorable to him, (ſo) doing or ſaying any thing that may procure honor to me amongſt men, that doth not punctually ſuite with the ſinceritie and ſimplicitie of Truth. Therefore I beg of the Chriſtian Reader,

that

that in Reading over theſe few Lines, that you would ſeriouſly Reade over all before you Conclude any thing to any: And to minde and ſeriouſly weigh, as what is ſpoke, & by whom, ſo to whom: And let not any thing that is really Truth, be diſowned, becauſe it is accommodated with ſuch poore and low Expreſſions, I am very much perſwaded that thoſe hearts who have been brought home thorough a ſence of their wandrings, and long for nothing ſo much as the Enjoyment of Gods Love and Power to Live up to it, may and will finde ſomething in this that may Refreſh their poore drooping Spirits in that Condition: It is to them Eſpecially that I deſire to preſent Theſe: And as for them I beg the ſame Refreſhments thorough Reading, as was the Cauſe of Speaking: And as for others who may Critically Carpe at the Expreſſion, or the party Expreſſing, I deſire them to take notice that the Father hath made it a very ſmall thing to me to be judged

of

of Men, All I beg is to have my heart kept up in daily Communion with God, And to have a Life ſuitable to his Love, for the Enjoyment of which mercies, I deſire of all that really Live with God to minde me, as I deſire to minde them in our approachments to God, And that they would in Reading over theſe not ſuffer any Infirmitie they know of the Author to Cauſe them to aggravate, or Enlarge any Infirmitie in the Expreſſions of the matter, but that they would in Chriſtian Wiſdome and Love Endeavour to Cover and Remove both.

And I further deſire, that if any to whom theſe may come, who have wantonly gone from God, and are at preſent unſencible of the great neceſſitie of their Returning to God, and of a Cloſe walking with God, That they would Candidly Reade over theſe few Lines: It may pleaſe the Father thorough that which they may looke upon as folly to manifeſt Wiſedome, And Darkneſſe to manifeſt Light, Such an

Effect

Effect as this, is the Earneſt prayer of him, that is

Chriſtian Reader,

Yours in that Life which Commands me to Love all, but to ſerve none in a way contrary to that Life.

P. H.

A DISCOVERY of the unſupportable Burthen of ſinne to a heart that is Saint-like ſenci-ble of Sinne.

What ſinne is in a Saints ſence.

BEloved, thoſe ſayings are moſt ſutable that flow from ſeeing, and thoſe ſeeings are Saint-like when they flow from En-joyments: And whatſoever is ſaid or ſeene and not upon that accompt, it may pro-bably profit the hearer, but not the ſpeak-er; God by a providence hath caſt mee amongſt you after a large travell in a wildernes condition, wherein God hath made me traviſh all my former tracts and miſtakes, in and under all Gods dealings with me, and my Actings towards him, God was pleaſed to carry me thorough

Strength and Weaknes, thorough good Reports, and bad Reports, to honour and diſhonour. In which Conditions I ſometimes ſtood, and ſometimes fell; ſometimes my heart was raiſed up with ſome high Raviſhments, which I judged Experiences, and at other times very low and in my ſelfe much loſt. After all God hath been pleaſed thorough a ſence of my owne unkindnes to bring my heart upon its knees, and to lay me very low before himſelfe; but hath againe by a diſcovery of his owne kindnes and love Refreſhed mee, and cauſed that which was made dumbe to ſpeake; now that which is at this time moſt ſencible in my heart to ſpeake to you from what God hath ſpoke to me in my preſent Condition, is three things. The firſt is a diſcovery of the unſupportable Burthen of ſinne when diſcovered by the light of Gods love. Secondly, The reſtles reſolution of a Saint, when he is Saint-like ſencible of his withdrawing from God to turne to God. Thirdly, The gracious and ſweet Entertainment the ſoule finds with God, when that he is brought home. And I ſhall declare it from three portions of Scripture. The firſt from *Pſalme* the 38. and the 4th verſe; the ſecond from *Pſalme* the 116th and

and the 7th verſe; The third from *Luke* the 15th and the 20th verſe; but I ſhall begin with the firſt at this opportunitie.

Pſalme the 38. and the 4th verſe.

For my Iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavie Burthen they are too heavy for me.

DEare friends, this Scripture I have formerly viewed, and have formerly ſpoke ſomething from it, but I am now conſtrained to declare what God hath preached to mee; for he hath been pleaſed, thorough a diſcovery of my unſutablenes, and my unkindnes; by which he hath not onely broken my bones, but he hath left no ſoundnes in my fleſh. I doe not meane by fleſh fleſhly nature, but all the fleſhlines of my owne Righteouſnes, by which formerly I refreſhed my ſelfe with the ſparkes of my owne performance, and refreſhed my ſelfe with the peace and tranquilitie I gathered from thence. But now, my wound is too large to be healed with ſuch a ſalve: but no more of that, but to the words, and in them you

may conſider in generall an affirmation, wherein you may firſt conſider the partie affirming, that is, *David.* Secondly, the affirmation it ſelfe, that is twofold; firſt, *That his iniquities are gone over his head:* Secondly, *They were a heavie burthen, too heavie for him.* Thirdly, You may conſider the time when it was when God had ſhewed him ſo much of his own nothingnes, that he had nothing left to live upon beſides free love. There was no reſt in his Bones, nor no ſoundnes in his fleſh; by *bones* and *fleſh*, wee are not to underſtand it naturally, but ſpiritually, and by *fleſh*, we are to underſtand it in a double ſenſe, according to theſe Scriptures: *Galatians* the 5. and the 19 verſe, *Gal.* the 6. and the 12 verſe, *Philippians* the 3. and the 3 and 4 verſes.

Deare friends, wee might obſerve a Concluſion from the party affirming the affirmation it ſelfe, and the time when, and the manner how; but wee ſhall draw up all into one Concluſion, and that is this.

Doct. *That ſinne to a Saint-like ſencible heart is an unſupportable Burthen.* In the proſecution the Concluſion, obſerve theſe foure things: Firſt, the proofe of it by Scripture. Secondly, Conſider what ſin

is.

is. Thirdly, What a Saint-like ſencible heart is. Fourthly, The reaſons why ſin to a Saint-like ſencible heart is an unſupportable burthen. Firſt, The Scriptures to prove the Concluſion are theſe; In the firſt place, view the Text which cleerly Confirmes the Truth of the Concluſion: Further ſee *Romaines* the 7. and the 24 verſe; how *Paul* cryes out as a reſtles man under the ſenſe of ſin. You may further ſee, *Pſal.* 51. the 1, 2, 3. and 4 verſes; *Jeremiah* the 3. and the 25 verſe: *Lamentations* the 5. the 15, 16, 17 verſes. All which doe diſcover how unſupportable the Burthen of ſinne is to a heart that is Saint-like ſencible of ſinne.

Deare friends, wee need not much proofe to him that knowes it, as I am confident every heart that is acquainted with God, hath ſufficient Experience of this to confirme it. The daily heart-breakings in that ſoule who is ſencible of his owne unkindnes by reading Gods kindnes doth demonſtrate it. But I ſhall adde no more but this; That heart which needs Confirmation of this truth without himſelfe, and hath not a ſufficient proofe within himſelfe, his Condition is ſad.

Secondly, let us Conſider what ſin is.

And in that Conſideration wee will Conſider three things.

Firſt, The nature of ſinne.

Secondly, The Concomitants of ſin.

And, Thirdly, The Effects.

Firſt, What is ſin: the Apoſtle tells you in the firſt Epiſtle of *John* the 3 Chap. and the 4 verſe; *That ſinne is the Tranſgreſſion of the Law; had there been no Law, there had been no ſinne.* The variation from a Law is ſinne. To ſpeake out the nature of ſinne is almoſt as impoſſible as to ſpeak out the nature of God. For ſinne in all things is contrary to God. Whatſoever you can ſay of Darknes, of Death, of Hell, and Devils, you may ſay of ſinne. Sinne comprehends all, and is one with either.

Revel. 2. 24 *John* in the *Revelations* tels us of the depth of Satans Temptation, which Temptation peradventure is but the limbe of the leaſt luſt: Oh! what a depth is there then in the whole body! Whatſoever happines and glory is ſeene in Light, the contrary is found in Darknes: whatſoever content and freedome you finde in love, & Light, the contrary miſery and bondage you finde in Death: but the perfections of all theſe miſeries is comprehended in ſinne as the body of them both.

That heart which is moſt ſencible of ſinne,

ſinne, is not able to ſpeake out the nature of ſinne. But I know that that heart which is Saint-like ſencible of ſinne, and doth ſee ſinne to preſent himſelfe as it doth ſo ugly in his owne eyes, thinkes ſin can never be preſented ugly enough, and eſpecially becauſe they ſee that in ſinning they doe not onely croſſe Law, but Love, they do not onely pierce paper, but the precious tenders of grace & love. *Zech.* 10. It is endles & boundleſs to Anatomize the nature of that, where not ſo much as nature dwels, but is inſlaved by it.

Secondly, Conſider the Concomitants of ſinne.

There are many, but I ſhall onely preſent ſo many of them as is at preſent in my owne view.

Firſt, Its that which drawes a darke Cloud over a mans eyes, and hinders him in his cleare beholding of God. Though a Chriſtian hath never ſo glorious a view of divine Light & Love that lives in God, if God ſuffers that heart to be padling and medling with ſinne and Darkneſs; and then the heart goes expecting to view God as before, though God be as he was before, (an unalterable God) yet there is a thick myſt drawne upon the eye, that he is like a man in a myſt, and knowes

Iſa. 59. 2. Pſal. 30. 7. Cant. 5. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

not where he is, nor what he ſees; juſt like a man whoſe eyes are fixed upon the Sunne, and there he beholds glorious objects; then takes them off from that Sun, and looks upon the Earth; and then goes to looke up to the Sunne againe, his eyes dazell that he can ſee neither; (Though it is true) It is not the glory that we view in God that covers our eyes, but rather the thick myſt that intercepts our view of that unchangeable obje&. And therefore the Example of the Sunne in an Eclipſe is more ſutable; for the Sunne at that time doth not looſe its glory in it ſelfe, but to us, our eyes being Intercepted by an Earthly ſubſtance.

Deare friends, If there be any that thinkes this Concomitants is not unſupportable; I will then appeale to that heart who doth not onely love to looke, but lives by looking upon Gods everlaſting Love. He will not onely ſay as the Philoſopher did, who onely delighted in viewing the Sunne, who would oftentimes ſay to them that Intercepted the beames of the Sunne; *You take that from me, which you cannot give to me.*

But they will ſay, O take away ſinne, which is not onely that which intercepts my view of that which is the comfort of my

my life, but it is Life it ſelfe. But I ſhall ſay no more to this particular, but this; O happy is that heart which is oft with God, and whoſe eyes are fixed upon that glory.

Secondly, It takes off a mans edge off his earneſt deſires after God: the comings in of Heaven is that which quickens, enlivens, and ſharpens the Eye of a mans affections after God. And the Trading with ſinne is that which deads and dulls a mans Spirit in his progreſſe towards God. If you aske me the reaſon, it is this: The Injoyment of Heaven, is the Element of a Saints life; And there is in ſinne a direct Antypathy. Take a fiſh out of the water, at firſt he may be full of motion, but when he hath moved a little upon the Earth, the eye of his activitie is ſoone loſt: And though a Fowle that can ſoare very high, yet if once it comes downe to the Element of water, it flyes very heavily: It is juſt ſo with a heart who is made able to fly high thorough the comings of Heaven; yet if once it paddles in the filthy poole of ſinne, it becomes like *Pharaohs* Chariots, whoſe wheeles are off. The ſadneſs of which Conſequence I leave to that heart which God hath made ſencible what it is to live

Heb. 3. 13. Heb. 12. 1. Rom. 8. 10.

live in Divine Loves as his proper Element. And what it is by ſin to be made dull in his motions heaven-wards.

A third Concomitant.

Sinne alwayes brings horrour and terrour with it, not onely as the Cauſe producing it as an Effect, but as the handmaide, for it lives in the very nature of it. Sinne brings ſmiles in the hand, but frowns in the heart: honey in the mouth, but bitternes in the bowels; and though wee doe not ſee it, and therefore wee thinke it not a Concomitant (yet it is ſo.) Lightning is ſeene before thunder, but they are both together; Its true, if men could heare the thunder before they ſee the Lightning, it is poſſible they might avoyde it, but there is a ſecret in nature preventing that: So there is as to the other agreat myſterie in Divine pleaſure. But I ſhall ſay no more as to this, but remember when you ſee Lightning that Thunder will come, and that heart is conſtrained to ſay it who ſees both.

Iſa. 57. 2.

Iſa. 33. 14.

Fourthly, and laſtly, It ſo far darkens the heart, that it makes the heart to love that leaſt which diſcovers ſinne moſt: O this is a ſad Concomitant, but it is ſo. Truly ſometimes it is with a Saints heart as it is with a young Scholler that hath

Joh. 3. 19, 20, 21.

hath play'd the Truant, he is afraid to goe to Schoole, and aſhamed to go home, though he knowes not how to live abroad: It is juſt ſo with a Saints heart, who hath dealt unkindly with God. And though he cannot live without God, yet ſinne hath ſo duld his ſpirit, and brought ſuch a ſhame upon his heart, that that which diſcovers God moſt, produces moſt ſadnes and ſhame. It is in this caſe as it was with *Adam*, When God called he was unwilling to make anſwer; At laſt ſaid, *I was naked, and therefore was aſhamed.* I need not minde that heart which lies under the ſence of his unſutablenes what the meaning of that is. He knowes the frame of his owne heart, and the motion of his minde, while he was Trading with ſinne, then he knowes he loved that leaſt which diſcovered truth moſt, and loved that moſt which diſcovered ſin leaſt. Gen. 3. 8, 9, 10.

The third thing in order are the Effects of ſinne, and they are theſe:

It diſframes the heart from either harkening to, or pleading with God, nay it makes the heart uncapable of performing any duty ſavourly that he owes to God, his heart is as it were benumbd, and his language loſt. O what ſweet Exchanges of language that doth flow from that heart Heb. 3. 13. Mark. 6. 52.

heart where God lives, and ſinne dyes: and how ſavourly doth a Saint ſpeake out God and Heaven when he lives ſencibly in that Light, but when there is any withdrawings from his dayly Communion with God and Heaven; come to a heart then, and you will finde him very unable, either to ſay, or doe, eſpecially when his Light is Eclipſed by ſome trading in Darkneſs.

The Effects of ſinne is not ſo in all; for thoſe men that are onely profeſſors, and act duty in a bare forme, and ſpeake by art, they are not capable of theſe alterations of the frames of the Spirit, in being framed and unframed upon this accompt wee are a ſpeaking off, and all times are alike to them, unleſs it be when nature is made drunke with ſinne, and ſo hath loſt his abilitie and art to move in Religion, ſo as to cover vice with ſeeming vertue; but I ſhall ſay no more to that.

The ſecond Effect in ſinne.

Matth: 26. 70. 72. 74. It brings the heart not onely to queſtion his Intereſt in God, but to queſtion God in his truth: O this is a ſad Effect, often ſeene, but ſeldome ſencibly ſeene. The nature of ſinne is to endeavour to cloud Light, though it cannot conquer it:

it: and if there be ſo much of the Dictates of Light left in the heart, as to tell, it doth not doe well to deale ſo unkindly with God. The Devill then begins to worke, to make the ſoule queſtion his propriety in God, and ſo goe from him; If that will not doe, then to queſtion God, and truth, and by that to undervalue him: and as much as in us lyes to ſhut out of doores all dictates of Divine Light that doth any way invite the heart to return: O that heart which is in this Condition is much to be lamented; and I feare there are too many in theſe times.

Thirdly, Trading with ſinne places the heart in a Station and Condition wherein the ſweet Riches of Light and Love, runnes not into. It is true, God diſpenſing grace, makes ſinners Saints, and ſo finds them in ſin when he comes*: but for Saints to run out in the practiſe of ſinners, they goe beſide the Rivers and Streames in which God was pleaſed to refreſh and make fat their hearts. Though it is true, ſome of Gods people which run wantonly from God, doe for ſometime Live in that wantonnes, upon ſome of the Reliques of their former Injoyments, ſo long as they will laſt, which is but a little time; for then they muſt Live upon

Mat. 5. 8. 13.

*Ezek 16. 6.

Rom. 5. 8.

Luk. 15. 15 upon huskes with the Swine, till they
16, 17. are brought to Returne to their Fathers houſe: O that all who have wantonly ſtrayed in their hearts from their Fathers Streames, wherein they were Refreſhed, as with marrow and fatneſſe, would now conſider where they are, and that ſo long as they ſit downe in the practiſe of ſinne, they Live not neere the Injoyments of Saints.

Fourthly, Sinne brings ſhame upon the ſoule, and moſt when the heart is neereſt God. A Converted ſinner is brought home to God with much ſhame, ſeeing himſelfe look ſo unlike God when he is brought before him. But a revolted Saint when recovered hath much more Cauſe of ſhame. *Jer.* the 3 Chap. and the 24 and the 25 verſes, for God hath more ground of laſhing and wounding ſuch a heart; for he can tell them not onely of lying in their bloud in the day of their nativitie, but of their deſtroying and ſpoyling the Earerings and Jewells he beſtowed upon them: As you may ſee in the 16 of *Ezekiel*, beginning at the 10th verſe, and ſo to the end of the Chapter. It is impoſſible to expreſſe how much the heart of a Saint bluſhes, and what ſhame covers the Spirit of a ſoul that hath gone

aſtray

aſtray from God, when it is brought again to look upon the old wonted loves, and to minde againe his happineſs in Gods heart. He is then like the Publican, Luk.18.13 dares not looke up to Heaven; or like the Prodigall, who deſires to be but a ſervant. Luk.15.19 Let me ſpeake but this one word or two to them who have wantonly gone from God, and now delight in ſinne.

Did you know what ſhame will accompany your Spirit, if ever God brings you home, it would much imbitter that ſeeming ſweetnes you gather from ſinne. There are many Effects of ſinne, but I ſhall reduce them I meane to ſpeake of to theſe two heads.

Firſt, Sinne is injurious to God.

Secondly, It is injurious to a Man.

Firſt to God, but in that conſider this Caution, God as God, can neither be injured by us, nor receive any addition of good from us: but when wee ſpeake of Injuries, wee are to looke upon God in his adminiſtrations or appearances towards us, and ſo God may be ſaid to be Injured, and to be honored or diſhonored, and in that ſence the Injurie to God conſiſts in theſe things. Job 22.2, 3. 1Sam.2.30.

Firſt, It clouds his glory amongſt men, eſpecially the ſinne of Saints: The Light, Life, Rom.2.24.

Life, & Love of God in Saints are beames of that divine body, they are ſparkes of that fire which purely lives in God: and when this Light and Love appeares in a Saints life, they are ſaid to glorifie God, and to cauſe men that view them to ſee their good workes, and to give glory to God, *Mat.*the 5.16. But when the lives of the people of God are full of darknes and ſinne, they doe exceedingly Cloud the beames of Gods beauty (as to men) Like the Clouds in the Aire which cover the Earth from beholding the Beautie of the Sunne.

Secondly, It denies the Authoritie of God, for a man that is a member of a Common-wealth not to conforme to the Lawes, doth deny the Authoritie there: and ſo thoſe ſoules that acknowledge themſelves related to God, and yet in their lives doe practiſe things contra-
*Tit.1.16. ry to God; they * doe deny his Autho-
Jude 4. ritie.

Thirdly, Sin doth as much as in it lyes
*Jer.5.25. binde*and hinder the goings out of God in his Love to doe us good: as you may ſee *Iſaiah* the 59. 2, 3. It is true, when God will ariſe in his Majeſtie in glory, ſin is drove out before him, and expelled
*Iſa. 1. 4. by him, and no ſin * can hinder him: but

ſinne

ſinne tends and doth what in it lyes to oppoſe the goings out of Divine Love, and in that ſence he is ſaid to be hindered.

Fourthly, It brings blackneſs upon that beauty which God delights to view, God loves a ſoule ſo as to beautifie him with the beautie of *himſelfe, and then he delights to view * that beauty: but ſo far as any of the people of God doe trade in, or medle with ſin or darknes, ſo far they draw a dark Cloud over, and throw dirt in the face of this beauty. As for the Injuries that ſin doth to the people of God, it may be reduced into three heads. *Ezek. 16. 14. *Cant. 2. 14.

Firſt, It is Injurious to him as he is a Chriſtian.

Secondly, As he is a Member of the State.

Thirdly, As he is a Maſter of a familie.

Firſt, The Injuries that ſinne doth to the people of God as they are Chriſtians, I have already ſpoken of, and therefore ſhall ſay no more, but onely ſpeake a word or two from the two Latter.

Secondly, Sinne is Injurious to a man as he is a member of the State, thats cleerly demonſtrated in many mens practiſes. What is that weakens the heart and tyes

up the hands of many men in Authoritie from ſuppreſſing of ſinne, but the guilt of ſinne in their owne *Conſciences; how is it poſſible for any man in any office to be zealouſly carried out in ſuppreſſing of unrighteouſneſſe, when they themſelves are unrighteous? Can a drunkard puniſh drunkennes, or a ſwearer, puniſh ſwearers, or an oppreſſor, puniſh oppreſſors? but as they are conſtrained to it, either by an overruling hand of providence, going beyond them, while it makes uſe of them: or els the neceſſitie in their Imployments conſtraine them to it. But ſuch doing is done very coldly, with a faint heart, and a weake hand, vice rather finding out their Authoritie, then their Authoritie finding out vice: but ſuch Actions are not honorable to the Actors in Gods ſence, though the Action may advance them among men.

*Rom. 2. 22, 23.

It is true, Providence ſometimes puts on *guilty men to ſuppreſſe and ſubdue guilty perſons, and unrighteous things: but then providence doth it in going beyond them: As hath not Experience proved that many men have done that which when it was done, it appeared in their owne eyes, and others, to be very righteous: yet it was ſo far beyond them that they

*2 King. 10 8, 9, 10. 1. 14. Iſa. 10. 5, 6, 7.

they themſelves had been Inſtruments to occaſion the taking away of the lives of many honeſt hearts for the ſtanding for the ſame things but the yeare before. If you aske me the reaſon why ſinne hinders men in ſuppreſſing ſin, my anſwer is this:

Firſt, Becauſe it takes away much of the face of Authoritie in the party puniſhed, by his knowing the party puniſhing to be guilty of the ſame thing.

Secondly, It doth weaken the ſpirits of a man when he lies under the guilt of that which he is puniſhed for, all his proſecuting doth but pierce into his owne ſpirit, and all his ſtirring doth but rouſe up guilt in his owne heart, and all his rubbing, doth but rub upon his owne ſoare, which doth much kill, diſturbe, and diſquiet his owne ſpirit, which cauſes many men in Authoritie when they are a puniſhing, to wiſh they had not knowne it; and they are apt to curtayle and leſſen it, if not cover it: And all this is occaſioned as a fruit of ſinne, from which wee may obſerve thus much:

That none are like to be good Common-wealths-men, but they that are godly and honeſt men; for them that have a chiefe Authoritie in the State, or in

Counties, or Parithes, can never ſuppreſſe vice vertuouſly, if themſelves are ſtrangers to vertue, and practiſers of vice. In the cloſe of this, remember but this Scripture, *Prov.* the 28. and the firſt verſe; *The wicked flies when no man purſues, but the righteous is as bold as a Lyon.*

Thirdly, It is Injurious to a man as he is a Maſter of a familie; and that thus; It binds him up in Exhorting his familie, to walke holily, when he knowes that his familie knows that he himſelfe walks unholily; or can he reprove vice, when he himſelfe is vitious? No, he cannot do it; If it be, it is very cold, poore, & emptie. The guilt in their owne hearts, produced by their unſaintlike carriage, doth exceedingly ſtraiten their hearts, and tye their hands, not onely to themſelves, as reproving and correcting, but alſo to their familie reproved and corrected; for at the very beſt, their familie, who are ſencible of their evills will judge it as the Devill correcting ſin. Therefore in the cloſe of this, let all that deſire to be profitable in their families, in ſuppreſſing evill, and encouraging good. Let them
* 1 Tim. 6. 2. firſt ſhew it in their *practice, before they firſt ſhew it in their power. But I ſhall ſay
Mat. 7. 5. no more as to the Effects of ſin, though there

there be many more; but I ſhall come to the reaſons, why ſin to a Saint-like ſencible heart is an Inſupportable Burthen, and the Reaſons are theſe:

A Saint ſees that ſin hath brought him into a Condition ſo bad, and ſo low, that himſelfe with all the world cannot recover him.*If a Chriſtian had any crevis to behold helpe beſides Chriſt, he would have ſome way to uphold his heart, and inable him to beare his burthen without going to Chriſt, but ſin is ſo large, and ſo broad, and ſo full of weight, that it ſincks all things under on this ſide of Heaven, which goe to beare it: (And this a Saint ſees) and therefore ſin to his heart is an unſupportable burthen. * Act 2.37 Act.16.30. Job 7. 20.

Secondly, Sin takes away the ground of patience, and therefore unbearable, and that it does; why? becauſe though there are promiſes to beare all oppreſſions, yet no promiſe to beare the practice of ſin. Therefore my former thus:

That Condition which is without promiſe is unbearable; but the practice of ſin, as the practice of ſin, is without promiſe (*Ergo*)* * Gal.3 29

The third Reaſon which makes ſin ſo unreaſonable, and ſo unſupportable to a

Saint-like ſencible heart, is becauſe he
* Rom. 7. 11. ſees that ſin is not onely a *lye in ſpeaking that which it will nor cannot doe, but whatſoever is contrary to ſins promiſe, is brought upon him. Contradiction in Expectation works diſtraction, but no where ſo unſupportable as the buſines of ſin, for there is no contradiction like that: It expects joy, but beholds ſorrow; it promiſed Light and Life, but
* Rom. 6. 22. behold Darkneſſe and * Death.

Fourthly, That which makes ſin ſo
Matth. 24. 50, 51. unſupportable to a Saints heart is this, though it be the laſt, it is not the leaſt, It is this;

That Light and Love which diſcovers a mans ſins to him, and by it his Loſt Condition, it doth ſweetly make up his Loſſes, by ſupplies from it ſelfe, that makes the ſoule in ſeeing ſin, to ſee that it hath not onely ſinned againſt Law, but againſt that Light and Love which diſco-
*Zech. 12. 10. Luk 15. 21 Pſal. 51. 4. vers and *ſupplies: And for a heart to ſee that he cannot lye ſafely no where but in the Fathers Love, and for him to Reflect upon himſelfe, and ſee how much not onely below, but contrary to that Love he hath lived in: Oh! how much doth this breake the heart, and wound the ſpirit: I leave to that Soule that after all his

his owne unkindneſſe hath now all his Refreſhments from the ſweet Incomes of the Fathers loving kindneſſe, he cannot chooſe but there ſee to the continuation of the Fathers nature as he is the Father: yet the want of his owne as he is a Childe, and he cannot but ſee how much hee indeavoured to kill that by which he now lives: 'tis impoſſible to declare how much the Reflection of this Love doth kill and Crucifie a Saints Spirit. The knowledge of which doth make ſin to be unſupportable: but no more of the Reaſons, but a word or two of uſe.

The firſt Uſe

Is an uſe of Information, to Informe us of the miſerable Condition of thoſe who make light of ſin, If ſin be ſo unſupportable to one that is made alive, ſure theſe people muſt needs be dead.

But ſome will object and ſay, They bleſſe God they ſee ſin, and they conceive ſin is caſt out, and ſubdued in them. In this there may be a very great miſtake, for men may ſee ſin, and yet not Saint-like ſencible of ſinne. And in ſome the Devill is ſaid to goe out, when he is not Caſt out; according to that Scripture, *Matth.* the 12. 43, 44, 45. But know this, ſin be onely gone out, and not conque-

red, it will Returne againe, according to the ſame Scripture, and if you ſee ſin, and not Saint-like, you may ſee it and be ſencible, and yet nothing. As *Pharaoh*, *Cain*, and *Judas*, &c. And therefore for feare of miſtakes, I ſhall propound two queſtions, and give my Anſwer to them, according to what Experience I have found in the like Caſe.

The firſt queſtion is, What the difference betwixt a Saint-like ſence of ſin, and the ſence of ſin a man may have, and be nothing.

Secondly, What are the demonſtrations to diſcover that ſin is not onely gone out, but caſt out?

To the firſt.

The difference betwixt a Saint-like ſence, and a bare ſeeing; lyes in theſe things.

Firſt, Where it is really Saint-like, it is alwayes ſencible of that moſt, which is by men ſeene leaſt: I meane the emptineſſe, barrenneſſe, baſeneſſe, and unſutableneſſe of its owne heart. But others who are *Judas*-like, are ſencible of that which men ſee moſt: If they are but conformable to what is without, they are never troubled for what is within: but he that is made ſencible of ſin by the comings

Rom. 7. 24
Iſa. 1. 30
Jer. 17. 9.

comings in of grace, he is ſo ſencible, if God ſhould cut off all dead branches without, yet that will not ſatisfie him ſo long as there is an old Coare within, but he will cry out as *Paul*; *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of ſinne.*

The people of God know that Actions without are but branches (though they oppoſe that) yet they minde the body moſt which is the uncleane fountaine within, and therefore you ſhall alwayes finde them crying out of an unſutable heart, quite contrary to others practice, who will ſometime complaine of ſuch unſutable and ſinfull acts: but at that time they will ſay, they have a good heart, and a good deſire, (alas, can the ſtreames be foule, and the fountain cleere, thats impoſſible.)

Secondly, A Saint-like ſencible heart when it is moſt ſencible of pardon, its moſt earneſt for power, quite contrary to the other: which never cryes for power, but when it is ſencible of a want of pardon: and if any thing comes in the Imagination to prompt phanſie, ſo as to cauſe any conceit that it enjoyes pardon; it is then not more but leſſe earneſt for power, and ſo their apprehenſions

henſions of Liberty, doth immediately beget Looſeneſſe. But that heart which is Saint-like ſencible of ſinne, the more God diſcovers pardon, the more they are earneſt for power, for all the diſcoveries of Gods love to ſuch a heart bindes up the heart more in Gods love, and the ſence of his kindnes produces double indearments of their hearts to God.

Rom. 7. 25. 1 Cor. 15. 56, 57.

Thirdly, A Saint-like ſencible heart is alwayes as thankfull to God for power as he is for pardon: nay I dare ſay, that that heart which ever was really wounded thorough the diſcoveries of his owne darkneſſe by the comings in of Gods Light, thinkes it ſelfe ſo much bound to heaven for any ſin as well as pardon, that when he doth enjoy any power, he is with as much Light and Love carried out, to bleſſe God for that mercy as he is for pardon: quite contrary are other hearts, who ſee ſin, but not Saint-like, they have ſome carryings out ſometimes, to acknowledge mercy in pardoning ſin, but at that time they are cold in begging power: nay, if they could ſee into their owne hearts, they would ſee that they had a heart that would thinke it a mercy to Enjoy pardon of ſin, and with it Liberty to ſin, not leſſe but more.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Thoſe hearts which ſees ſin Saint-like, their ſorrow for ſin doth very much ſwallow up the ſenſe of danger: but others that are onely ſencible of ſinne by the Convictions of a Law, without the Comings in of his Love, they through the ſence of danger are ſo ſwallowed up in horror, that there is hardly any roome for a godly, or a Goſpel ſorrow. Deare friends, if God would give us hearts to minde our hearts in this thing, wee ſhould ſee very great miſtakes in Relation to this godly or Goſpel ſorrow; but I ſhall leave that, knowing all ſoules that live with God ſee the difference of that in their owne ſpirits: And to make others ſee before God gives them Eyes, it is impoſſible.

Fifthly, A Saints ſence of ſin makes him run not leſſe but more to God: The other mans ſence of ſin makes him run not leſſe but more from God: The one runs like the * Prodigall Sonne to his Fathers houſe, or rather his Fathers heart: The other is farre from it, but it rather cauſes him like * *Judas* to run to the place of Execution: Truly in this there is a very ſtrange Paradox: that Light and Love which comes into a Saints heart, doth not onely diſcover ſin,

* Luk. 15. 19, 20.

* Mat. 27. 5.

ſin, but produce much ſhame upon the heart, upon the ſence of ſin, and moſt when it drawes neereſt God: yet the ſoule cannot chuſe bnt run to God, and is never well but when it is neereſt God.

Sixtly, A ſaint-like ſence of ſin is alwayes ſo ſtrict upon his watch, to prevent ſin, that he feares the appearances of ſin as well as the power; but another heart is not ſo, but no more of this, but to the ſecond queſtion, to demonſtrate the difference betwixt ſins going out, and ſins being caſt out.

Firſt, If ſin be caſt out it alwayes leaves an awfull feare and care behinde it: but if it onely went out, it leaves a man very ſecure, as you may ſee by the Text, *Matt.* the 12th. and the 45. *verſe.*

Secondly, That heart which Chriſt hath conquerd in, and caſt out ſin for, when it is ſenſible, it is (not leſſe but) more humble, and it muſt needs be ſo, for that Light, and Life that did conquer ſin, and doth diſcover ſin, doth diſcover to the heart its unſufficiency, as before to ſubdue ſin, now again to keep under ſin, that the ſoule cannot chuſe in that ſence but lye very low: But its otherwiſe with that heart where ſin onely

onely went out. They thinke highly of themſelves, and are apt to ſacrifice to their owne nets, or like the Phariſee, *Luke* the 18. 11. *I thanke thee that I am not as this Publican*, but alas, it is not ſo with a heart that is ſencible of ſin by the commings in of Chriſt, he judges himſelf the worſt of Creatures:* * Pſal. 22. 6.

Thirdly, If ſin be caſt out, the Light and power that caſt it out teaches that ſoule to leane more upon Gods power, and to goe leſſe upon his own Legs, but it is not ſo with the other. Eph. 3. 8.

Fourthly, That heart which ſin is caſt out of, and doth not goe out, is ſo ſencible of what is done for it: that it doth not onely lye low before God, and feare the appearances of ſinning againſt God, but it is much carried to bleſſe and give glory to God: But where ſin onely went out, that man is not wounded thorough the ſence of his own ſin and weakneſſe, ſo as to give glory to God, for any victory over ſin, but rather minde his own Induſtry and ſtrength, and attributes much to his owne care, but little to Gods kindneſſe. Rom. 7. 25. 1 Cor. 15. 57.

But I ſhall ſay no more in anſwer to thoſe queſtions, but another word or two of ſome other uſes, and ſo conclude. The

The ſecond uſe is an uſe of adviſe to the people of God, by any meanes to beware of ſin; I might uſe many Arguments, but I deſire you to minde what I have ſaid before, and doe not onely conſider, how unſupportable a burthen it will be, and how much it will wound you, when the Lord cauſes you to returne; but conſider withall theſe things following.

Firſt, Conſider the nature of ſin, how low, baſe, and unworthy a thing it is: you ſhall never ſee what it ſayes, unleſſe it be in the laſt pangs, when God makes it ſpeake out its own nature, and that is death and darkneſs.*

* Rom. 6. 21.

Secondly, Conſider how much it is below a Saints * ſpirit, nay, the truth is, if you conſider ſin well as Sin, it is below the Reaſon of a naturall man: tis ſo poore, baſe and Ignoble, that Reaſon in a naturall man, were his eyes but open in his own Reaſon, he would kick it out of doores: It is a meere Jeſuiticall Tyrant, ſpeaking faire to accompliſh its owne ends, and by it to bring the Creature to ſlavery and bondage. The truth is, if the people of Gods heart were often with God, and fed upon thoſe glorious, noble and divine injoyments:

Mat. 24. 50, 51.

* Hoſ. 14. 8.

ments: Sin would not finde ſo eaſie an entertainment in their hearts, but they being ſo often abroad, and ſo little at home, I meane in their fathers houſe, or rather in his heart, is that which occaſions many ſlips and falls, by harkning to thoſe deluding Intiſements, which afterwards will appear to be an unſupportable burthen.

Thirdly, Conſider moſt of all againſt whom you ſin; It is not onely againſt Law, but againſt Love, and againſt that deare Love which is your life: Truly, if the people of God had alwayes power from God, to conſider how injurious and unkinde they are to Gods heart, when they ſhake ſin by the hand, they would have much more Reſolution againſt ſin, and ſay as *Ephraim*, *What have I to doe any more with Idolls? Hoſea* the 14. *chap.* and the 8. *verſ.* or ſay as *Joſeph*, *Geneſis* the 39. and the 9. *How can I doe this and ſin againſt God*, or as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Roman* the 6. the 1, and 2. I know it is not in the Creatures power to minde it ſelfe, but I am ſure when God gives power, it is a great advantage to us and diſadvantage to ſin, to weigh well the great oppoſition ſin makes againſt the Comings in of Divine

vine Loves, nay, how much it wounds the Lord Chriſt afreſh: Some thinke that the worſt that even ſin did was to bring Chriſt upon the Croſſe: but I muſt tell you, though that was great, yet know alſo that every time the people of God ſin, they doe as it were *crucifie Chriſt afreſh*, for Chriſt is as really crucified within us, as he was upon the Croſſe for us: and therefore every time you ſin, know this, that in your owne ſoule, you accuſe, you arraigne, condemne, crown with thornes, ſpit in the face, and ſmite with the hand, nay, pearce and wound that dearly beloved unction, that is come downe from God, and truly had we but power to conſider, that indeared Love and Life that from God ſpeaks to us, nay, that woes and intreats for Entertainment with us, not to adde to it ſelfe, but to advance us, undoubtedly ſuch thoughts would much conquer us, and ſin in us.

Heb. 6. 6. Heb. 10. 29.

There are many other motives, but I ſhall leave them, onely take notice, it is dangerous to be a *Dydimus*, not to beleeve till you feele: Take notice of this from what my ſoule knowes, that ſence will be very ſad, and the rather, becauſe there is no Reliefe when you are wounded,

ed, but in that you have wounded, by that which wounded you; oh! what will you ſay when you come for Reliefe from that deare heart: and to draw life from thoſe ſweet Loves, that you did no leſſe then throw dirt in the face of; oh! if there be any of the people of God, who are ſo farre deluded as under the notion of Liberty, are run into looſneſſe: oh! I beg, nay I would beg with teares for them, to conſider from whence they are fallen, and to remember their firſt Love, *Revela.* 2. 4, 5. It is poſſible ſome may be made ſo unſenſible by their wanton ſinning, as that they may make a jeſt of theſe ſayings: As for ſuch ſpirits I ſhall leave them, deſiring to ſee my ſelfe in them, and ſo rather conclude with mourning, then to ſpend time in diſpute with all the objections that ſuch may bring, and ſhall onely give anſwer to two or three objections, which are more common and accuſtomary, yet like deceiving.

Object. How can this be, when as the Apoſtle Saint *John* in the firſt Epiſtle 3. 9. ſaith, *he that is borne of God cannot ſin?*

Anſw. In my anſwer to this, I ſhall not trouble you, in rehearſing how often

the Devill hath preſented me with this Scripture, to perſwade me that the people of God cannot ſin, but my anſwer to this Scripture is briefely thus.

The ſame Apoſtle in the ſame Epiſtle, *chap.* 1. 8. *verſe*, ſaith, that *whoſoever ſaith he hath no ſin is lyar and deceives himſelfe*; Therefore he doth not intend but that the people of God, may and doe ſin, but it is true that in them which are borne of God; in them I meane that Saintſhip or unction, or anoynting, or ſpirit of life which comes from God, and is one with God: that doth not nor cannot ſin: 'tis true, it cannot ſin, becauſe it is borne of God. We may as well ſay, we can turne Heaven into Hell, and turne light into darkneſſe, as to turne that into ſin (or that to ſin) no, deare hearts, that is of another nature, that's Gods little one: that is placed in us to juſtifie Wiſdome, and to condemne folly: and to breath out Love and Light in oppoſition to darkneſſe, and 'tis ſo far from being capable of joyning with ſin, that its proper worke is to arraigne, accuſe, and condemne the old man, which was in *Paul*, though he was a childe of God, *Rom.* 7. 20, 21, 22, 23 *verſes*. Now this

Mat. 11. 19.

this unction,* or this thing borne of God gives us the denomination of being the children of God; but though it is the power of God in us to kill ſin, by the nature of it ſelfe; yet it never did nor will turne ſin into grace: nor yet manifeſt ſo much in this life as to fill Saints with grace, and free them from all ſin, but they muſt have ſome *Canaanites* and *Hittites* in their hearts.*

* 1 Joh. 2. 20, 21.

* 2 Cor. 12. 7.

Now the people of God is a generall tearme, and envolves the whole perſon either men, or women in a Scripture-ſence; but that generall doth include as a new, ſo an old Man, and both in one ſubject;* The one to be pulled down, and the other to be exalted; one to dye, and the other to live (for it is Life) now when the Apoſtle ſaith, that which is borne of God, cannot ſinne, he intends that principall of Life which lives in us, and doth not include the whole man: and when he ſaith, *he hath no ſin, he deceives himſelfe and is a lyar*: he intends the old rotten Man in our forme, which is in us, and as to our fleſhly part is one with us.

* Rom. 7. 21, 22, 23.

Object. Where there is no Law there can be no ſin, but the people of God are by Chriſt freed from the Law, and

if freed from it, then there is to them no Law, if no Law, then no ſin.

Anſw. That Chriſt hath freed beleevers from the Law, the Scripture is cleare: but that Chriſt which hath freed us from a Law, hath given a Law to us, which he calls a *new* * *Commandement*: but as the Law was in the hand of *Moſes* a condemning and a killing Law: ſo Chriſt hath freed us from it, and as it was meerely conſidered without us, and not wrought in the adminiſtration of the Law, in that ſence we are free from it: * yet take notice that we are under that Law, that doth engage a cloſe walking with God, and though God hath been pleaſed to write that Law within us, yet know it is ſuitable to that Law which is without us: I muſt confeſſe in ſome ſence, it is improper to ſay a childe of God as a child of God, a Chriſtian as a Chriſtian, to be under the Law; and why? becauſe the Saintſhip of a Saint, or that in us which makes us, or gives us the denomination of Chriſtians, or Gods child is made up of the Law, and is Law it ſelfe, and is no further under the Law, then a Law is capable to be under it ſelfe. That holineſſe, purity, ſpirituality, that the Law * without us preſented

*John 13. 34. 1 John 2. 8.

*Rom. 18. 4, 5.

* Heb. 8. 10.

preſented to us, is now wrought in us, and ſo the power commanding, is the power Conforming. Now whether this be any ground for Looſeneſſe, I leave to any ſoule to judge, or whether this be not much more binding, and admits of no Liberty to a looſe walking, but engages much * more. *Rom. 7. 6.

Object. If the Law be within us, what need we minde any thing that is without us?

Anſw. 1. The Law within us is not contrary to the Law without us, as I told you before, if you looke upon it in a goſpell-ſence, thats to ſay in the hand of Chriſt (for the heart and hand is both one) and any Lawes relating to Religion in another ſence, we are not to minde as being bound to it.

Secondly, But the Law in a Goſpell-ſence, ſoules that lie in the life of that Law cannot chuſe but love it, as a glaſſe to looke upon that which by its Light appeares lovely; I meane holineſſe and Righteouſneſſe, which is one with the delight of God.

Thirdly, I ſhall give no further anſwer to this laſt objection, but onely thus, to tell you from what experience I have formerly found, that it is a great

ſigne of a heart thats ſick, when it endeavours to draw tolerations for Looſeneſſe, from a diſcourſe relating to a Saints Liberty. Deare hearts, let me conclude with this, that that ſoul which is really acquainted with his Liberty from Divine Love, is ſo ſwallowed up, and ſo conquered by it, that its never in its proper courſe, but when it lives up to that Love. And his being unbound to the Law, in that ſence which before I expreſt, doth not admit of acting looſely, but acting Lively, as you may ſee: *Gallat.* the 2. and the 19. verſe, *I thorough the Law*, ſaith *Paul*, *am dead to the Law, that I may live to God:* ſo his freedome was not the cauſe of his dying to God, but living to God: but no more of this uſe. The next uſe is an uſe of comfort to the people of God, who groane under the burthen of ſin.

See Rom. 6. 1, 2.

If ſinne to a Saint-like ſencible heart be an unſupportable burthen, then it is a diſcovery of a Saint-like ſencible heart, when ſin is thus a burthen to it: Deare hearts, though it be ſad to lie under the ſence of ſin, yet it is ten thouſand times ſadder to ſinne, and not be ſencible.

Truly though the heart be wounded, yet

yet thoſe ſtripes God will heale,* and they are but deare laſhes of his Love, in bringing out the ſoule into a further injoyment of Life, and if any ſoules have cauſe to rejoyce, tis them that mourne, and for your comfort conſider theſe things.

* Mat. 11. 28. Matth. 5. 3, 4.

Firſt, God is more ready in Chriſt to take off the burthen, then to lay it on, ſee the Prodigall, *Luke* the 15. and the 20. When the Prodigall did but come, the Father ran and gave him eaſe, before he diſcovered his burthen: truly did groaning hearts know, how much the* Bowells of God earnes towards them, and how freely Chriſt is held out to them, and how ſweetly God in promiſes runs out for them with freeneſſe, to give out himſelfe to them: It would much refreſh them: doth Chriſt come to ſave? *it is not the Righteous* * *but ſinners*, Doth God juſtifie? then it is the ungodly, *Rom.* the 4. 5. Doth the Father make a Feaſt? It was for the returne of a poore Prodigall; Doth the Heavens rejoyce? it is for the returne of the loſt ſheep. Truly the people of God never mourne as ſinners, but then God rejoyces over them as Saints.

* Jer. 31. 20. Iſa. 63. 15.

* Mar. 2. 9. 13. Luk. 19. 10.

Secondly, Conſider not onely the readineſſe of God to take off the burthen, but the freeneſs of Chriſt to bear * it: As upon the Croſſe, where he willingly ſubmitted to the laſh of the Law, and the frownes of Heaven for the ſins of poore undone Creatures: ſo he doth alſo call upon poore hearts oppreſt under the burthen of ſin, to exerciſe faith in entertaining his tenders: to eaſe their burthens, and to give them reſt: *Matt.* the 11. and the 28.

* Iſa. 63. 3. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Phil. 2. 5, 6, 7.

Thirdly, Conſider that thy condition is not alone, all that God will crowne he thus croſſes, and all he makes to live, he thus crucifies, and all he heals, he thus wounds; * and therefore when thou art moſt under the burthen of ſinne thinke of *David*, not onely in this text, but in the 51 *Pſalme*, and in many other places, where he cries out as a man undone, ſo did *Paul*, *Rom.* the 7. ſo did *Jeremiah*, ſo did *Eſay*, ſaying, *Woe is mee, for I am undone, being a man of unclean lips*, *Eſay* the 5. and the 6.

* Iſa. 40. 4, 5. Iſa. 61. 1, 2, 3.

Fourthly, Conſider it is Gods way, not onely by Light to diſcover darkneſſe, but by diſcovering Darkneſſe and Death bring thee to Light and Life; Therefore under the Cloud looke to the Concluſion,

Concluſion, and behold Light: for though there be darkneſſe in the habitations of *Ægypt*, there is Light in the dwellings of * *Iſrael*; my meaning is, though there be trouble and darkneſſe in thy Egyptian heart, yet there is enough Love and Light in the boſome of Jeſus, which is the place of reſt for the *Iſraelites* of God to dwell in. * Exod. 10 22, 23. Micah 7. 8.

Fifthly, Conſider, That though God in thy eyes ſeemes to frowne, yet know that they are but the beginnings of his ſmiles. And though in thy eyes he hath ſeemed to withdraw himſelfe, yet know it is but for a moment, and he will meet thy heart with everlaſting kindneſſe, *Iſaiah* the 54. and the 8 verſe.

Object. But alas my trouble hath been very long, and therefore I feare it is not that burthen which God is ſo ready to remove, which makes me thinke my heart is not Saint-like ſencible.

Anſw. To which I ſhall anſwer thus; That it may ſeeme long in our eyes, yet if it be Gods time it is not long, *Iſa.* 54. 8.

Secondly, Conſider that though wee have ſtayed long waiting for Heaven; Heaven hath ſtayed longer waiting for us *. * Can. 5. 2. Iſa. 30. 18.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Know that it ſhall not abide one houre or moment longer then to accompliſh Gods * end: and though it ſeemes a loſſe, that loſſe will be a great gaine.

*1 Cor. 10. 13.
2 Cor. 4, 17

Fourthly, Though thou haſt ſtayed long, thou art not alone. *David* groaned ſo long till his bones were broken, and there was no ſoundneſſe left in his fleſh: ſo when God hath deſtroyed thy ſtrength, and thy ſelfe Righteouſneſſe, which *Paul* calls *fleſh*, Philip. the 3. He will then come and not tarry.

Obiect. But alas I cannot thinke it is with others as with mee, for my ſinnes are not onely ſinnes before Converſion, but I have often withdrawne from God ſince.

Anſw. Was not the Prodigall Sonnes Condition ſo? was it not ſo with *David*, which I deſire you to Conſider, and other two or three Scriptures, which God was pleaſed to ſpeake much Comfort to my heart by: As *Jeremiah* the 3. and the 1. and ſo on; God ſayes in the firſt verſe thus much; That if a mans Wife be put away for Adultery, he will never returne; *But*, ſayth he, *you have played the harlot, not with a few, but many, yet Returne unto me:* and gives them this Argument

Argument afterwards; For *I am married to you*; and againe and againe three or foure times, he ſayth, *Returne unto mee, for I am thy God.* And theſe Intreaties were expreſt to a people that were fallen from God: and he ſpeakes to them before they Returne, that they may returne. If there were ſuch heart-earnings after them before they returned, what deare affection was and is expreſt, when a ſoule doth Returne. Deare friends, at your leiſure Reade over the 26 of *Ezekiel*, the beginning of the Chapter diſcovers Gods great Love to them when they were in their bloud: and how he brought them home and beautified them with his owne beauty, that was a time of Love. In the middle of the Chapter, he diſcovers how his people had run from him, and given their Jewells unto harlots, and gone a whoring from God, not onely once but againe and againe. Now in the latter part of the Chapter, verſe the 59. he declares that he might doe by them as they had done by him; yet in the 60 verſe, he tells them he will not, but he will Remember his Covenant, and know further for thy Comfort that he ſpeakes this not to a people that were aſhamed, but to a people that had dealt unkindly,

and

and ſinned, that ſo they might be aſhamed. So then if God hath diſcovered thy ſin, and made thee aſhamed, (know) that he is not leſſe carried out in kindneſſe to imbrace thy heart, though peradventure at preſent thou ſee it not; according to that in the 11th of *Hoſea* and the firſt verſe.

Object. But that which ſads my heart is, the longer I live, and the more Light I enjoy, I yet ſtill ſee not leſſe, but more deadneſſe, darkneſſe, and baſeneſſe in my owne heart.

Anſw. In my anſwer to this obje&tion, Conſider theſe things.

Firſt, Thinke it not ſtrange, for this is a truth, that all Saints finde by Experience, that the more they enjoy diſcoveries of Light from God, the more unkindneſſe and darkneſſe they ſee in themſelves, * and it muſt needs be ſo. The darker the roome, the leſſer the filth is diſcovered; The brighter the Sunne, the more proſpe&tious the motes, and where the beames of the Sunne give out themſelves, as the flowers give out their ſweet ſmells; ſo the dunghill gives out his noyſome ſmell: ſo the more the Sunne of Righteouſneſſe doth ariſe in us, though the graces in us flowing from him,

* Job 42. 5, 6. Iſa. 6. 5.

him, doe give out their ſweet odours in their ready giving way to him; ſo the noyſome appearances, and the ugly ſhapes of the old man doe appeare the more; as *Paul* tells you, *Rom.* the 7th and the 9th, *That when the Law of the Spirit, or the Law of grace came, ſinne revived, and he dyed:* Nay it ſo Revived, that's to ſay, it was not onely diſcovered, but alſo Roſe up in oppoſition againſt the comings in of grace, that *Paul* at laſt had little els to glory in, but his Infirmities, *Cor.* the 1. and the 12, the 9 and the 10th. Sin is like a ſtreame, the more it is bunged up, the more it will roare. Therefore, deare friends, thinke it not ſtrange, but rather with ſatisfaction ſit ſilent in the will of God, knowing it to be Gods way as with one hand to Lift up thy heart thorough a diſcovery of kindneſſe, ſo to lay thee low by the diſcovery of thy unſutableneſſe: and he will never leave thee till he hath diſcovered all the rotten Roomes in thy owne Spirit, and the longer you live you will not ſee leſſe but more, for there is ſtill more to be ſeene.

Secondly, Knowing it is the Devill and ſinnes way to worke, not onely to Endeavour to goe on in its old Courſe in

in a gracious heart, but being oppoſed by the Spirit of God, it makes ſtill new oppoſitions; and doth manifeſt it ſelfe with more varieties of motion in oppoſing Light, then it doth in that heart where nothing but darkneſſe dwels, for there is nothing to oppoſe it. Now when the people of God ſee ſuch freſh motions of Darkneſſe to oppoſe Light, they preſently judge their Condition worſe then it was before: But they have great cauſe to Rejoyce, who are ſencible of theſe things; and for your Comfort take notice, That all Saints finde not onely by comings in of Light, a greater diſcovery of ſinne, but there is really new motions of the old Man, in oppoſition to the new, which never was before; and in that ſence *Paul* ſaith, *Sin revived*, as well as in his ſeeing ſinne more.

Thirdly, In the laſt place Conſider a Cunning practiſe that the Devill hath, not onely in making Chriſtians queſtion grace, becauſe they ſee themſelves want grace, but in perſwading them that all motions to ſinne, is ſinne, and for that End ſometimes in halfe a quarter of an houre, he will caſt in a thouſand ſeverall motions of ſinne, and though the heart doth not Entertaine them, but lyes groaning,

groaning, as being afraid of them, yet the Devill immediately will come with applications to that heart ; telling him that it is impoſſible he ſhould have any thing of Heaven in his heart, having ſuch unheard of ſinnes there, and ſinnes not to be reported ; The poore ſoule thorough Ignorance groanes under this burthen, concluding all is truth : And ſo is apt to exclude all Intereſt in Heaven upon that accompt. But deare hearts, take heed of ſuch deluſions ; and doe but minde it, and you will ſee many ſuch appearances every day. But I ſhall ſay no more as to the anſwer of that obje-ction.

Object. But my Condition muſt needs be ſad, and much unlike a Saint, for I have not power to exerciſe Faith in drawing any Refreſhment from Chriſt, or Comfort in applying any promiſe.

Anſw. Thy Condition is not alone, it is and hath been the Condition of many Saints ; but yet in anſwer to this, Beloved friends, I would have you Conſider theſe things.

Firſt, Though it is our dutie, and with it our Refreſhments to lay hold upon, and to make applications of Jeſus Chriſt : yet our happineſſe lyes more in Chriſts

*Joh.15.16 Chriſts laying hold of us: * 1 *John* 4. Jud. 24. 10.

Secondly, It is Gods way many times to leave his people without the ſenſitive part of their Comfort: and though they do believe, and do know, and doe ſee, yet they are many times left without power *Hoſ.11.3 to be ſencible they * ſee, that ſo in the 1 Joh.5.13 Cloſe they may be brought off from Living upon their owne knowing, and ſeeing God: and made to Live upon Gods knowing and ſeeing them.

Thirdly, Many times the people of God are hindered in applying Chriſt and promiſes, becauſe they looke upon them thorough a wrong glaſſe (*viz.*) thorough their owne Righteouſneſſe and goodneſſe, and when that ſeemes dead, their eyes grow dimme, for there is ſo much penurious proceedings in the beſt of Saints, that they will not, nor dare not touch a promiſe without holy hands and holy hearts. Whereas wee are not to beleeve, becauſe we are holy, but wee are to beleeve being unholy, that wee may be holy.

I now remember what Mr *Hocker* ſaid in the ſame caſe concerning the hinderance that Chriſtians meet with in applying promiſes. It is with them, ſaid he,

he, as with a man that goes to take a ſtaffe in his hand, if he puts the backe of his hand to the ſtaffe, he cannot hold it till he puts it in the palme of his hand: ſo it is with the people of God; when they goe to a promiſe, they goe to lay hold on it with the backe ſide of the hand of faith, and that they doe theſe wayes.

Firſt, When they looke upon themſelves, as they are in themſelves, and not looke upon themſelves as they are in Chriſt. In themſelves they are altogether unworthy: In Chriſt they are worthy; In themſelves they are blacke, in Chriſt they *are comely. *Can. 1. 8. Eph. 5. 27.

Secondly, So they alſo doe when they endeavour to goe to Chriſt thorough a promiſe, and not to a promiſe thorough Chriſt, wherein they move by their owne ſtrength, and that's their back-ſide, and not by the power of Chriſt, which is properly the hand to Lead them to the heart of all promiſes: He is the ſumme of every promiſe, and all promiſes are ſummed up in him: In him we enjoy every one, and without him we enjoy never a one. If you would know what a promiſe is, I ſhall diſcover

my thoughts in this generall Tearme that includes all.

A promiſe is the declaration of Gods good will: Chriſt is the principall declarer, and he is alſo the thing declared: and ſo he is the ſumme of promiſes, and in that ſence promiſes are ſummed up in him.

Thirdly, We are ſaid to goe with the back-ſide of the hand to a promiſe, when we ſo looke upon corruption in us, that we dare not apply promiſes of Life, but as we ſee ſinne dye, and doe not Indeavour to apply promiſes, that ſin which is alive may dye.

And therefore deare Friends, in the Cloſe of this Remember two or three things, that Experience hath, and Experience will Confirme to all beleevers.

Firſt, None applyes Chriſt, till Chriſt layes hold on him, 1 *Joh.* 4. 19.

Secondly, That no heart brings any holineſſe to Chriſt, but what they firſt had from a promiſe in Chriſt.

Thirdly, It is not Gods way for us to conquer ſinne, and then beleeve, but to Conquer ſinne through beleeving, 1 *John* 5. 4.

Fourthly, If the apprehenſions of ſin getting

getting ſome ſtrength, doth occaſion a Saint by feare to weaken faith: that gives not leſſe but more ſtrength to ſinne: but it is Chriſts way to kill ſinne through beleeving.

Therefore beloved Friends, Let me beg of you to be very ſerious in weighing the worth of Gods tenders, and alſo the way of Gods tenders. And know this, As it is dangerous for men, under the notion of beleeving free grace, to give way to ſinne, ſo it is dangerous to ſtay from beleeving grace, till wee Conquer ſinne. Pray take notice that God brings fullneſſe to emptineſſe, and Light to Darkneſſe, and Life to Death, and goodneſſe to *unworthineſſe. Therefore there is no Soule ſo emptie, and ſo poore, and ſo unworthy, and ſo ſinfull, but there is enough in Chriſt to anſwer all. And deare Friends, take heed that you doe not penuriouſly ſtand out, and ſay, you will make your ſelves fit before you come to Chriſt. That kinde of humilitie is great pride: And you endeavour to doe that which is endleſſe and eaſeleſſe. Therefore Conſider, as the promiſe, and your need of a promiſe, ſo conſider the way how to apply a promiſe, and doe not endeavour

*Matth. 11 28. Rom. 5. 6. Iſa. 40. 29.

to take hold of the ſtaffe with the backe of your hand, but the palme: And for that End ſeriouſly minde what hath been ſaid. And the Lord give us to underſtand the truth as it is in Jeſus; but I ſhall ſay no more in anſwer to this objection, nor to the Text at this time. Though there are many other uſes might be made of it; but I ſhall onely at this time Conclude with the words in the Concluſion; Which is:

That ſinne to a Saint-like ſencible heart is an unſupportable Burthen.

The

The reſtleſſe Reſolution of a Soule to returne to God who is Son-like ſencible of his withdrawing.

Withdrawings from God are dangerous.

DEare friends, I told you before that my deſire was to diſcover to you three things.

Firſt, How unſupportable ſin is to a heart that is made ſencible.

Secondly, How reſtleſſe a heart is, that is ſencible of his withdrawings from God, till he doth returne to God. Of the firſt I have already ſpoke, I am now to enter upon the ſecond, and of that I ſhall deſire to ſpeak ſutable, to what God hath made known in me; and that Scripture which I deſire to ſpeake it from is:

Pſalme the 116. and the 7. verſe.

Returne unto thy reſt O my ſoule, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

IN which words you may conſider in generall two things.

1. An Exhortation.
2. The Reaſon and foundation.

The Exhortation in theſe words.

Returne unto thy reſt (O my ſoule.)

The Reaſon and foundation in theſe words.

For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

In the Exhortation we may conſider ſeverall things.

Firſt, The party exhorting, thats *David.*

Secondly, the party exhorted, thats his ſoule, *O my ſoule.*

Thirdly, The Exhortation it ſelfe, *Returne,* In which Exhortation there is ſomething implyed, beſides what is expreſt.

The

The thing implied is, that his heart had withdrawn from its reſt.

Fourthly, there is the manner of the Exhortation, it is an earneſt Exhortation.

Returne oh my ſoule.

Beſides, it is a ſpirituall Exhortation; therefore he calls upon his ſoule. We might now divide the Reaſon and foundation, as we have done the Exhortation, and from each particular draw a Concluſion: but that kinde of ſpeaking is neither profitable to you, nor ſatisfactory to my ſelfe.

Therefore we ſhall paſſe over the particulars, and reduce all to theſe three Concluſions, and they are theſe.

Firſt, That the beſt of Saints are apt to draw from their Reſt.

Secondly, that heart which is made ſencible by the Lord, that he is withdrawn from his Reſt, he is reſtleſs till he doth returne.

Thirdly, That the knowledge of the fulneſſe, and bounty of God is the grand ground of moving a ſoule to turne to God, that hath withdrawn from God.

Of the firſt Concluſion we ſhall ſpeak briefely but a word or two, becauſe

what is conſiderable to ſpeak to, we ſhall ſpeak in the ſecond Concluſion.

Doct. *The beſt of Saints are ſometimes apt to withdraw from their Reſt.*

In the opening of the Concluſion, we ſhall conſider theſe things.

Firſt, we ſhall declare the truth of this by Scripture.

Secondly, To ſhew you what I meane by the people of Gods Reſt.

Thirdly, We ſhall declare what it is to withdraw from that Reſt.

Fourthly, Give you the Reaſons and grounds, why the beſt of Saints are ſometimes apt to withdraw from their Reſt.

Firſt, Scripture, its cleare from the text it ſelfe; for it is clearly implyed in the words, for had not his ſoule withdrawn from its Reſt, he need not exhorted it to returne: but yet for further proofe, view at your leiſure theſe Scriptures following.*

*Ier. 2. 13. Judges 10. 10. 1 Sam. 12. 10. Nhem. 9. 28. Heb. 11. 1, 2. Pſal. 51. 4. So *Paul*: Rom. 7.

Secondly, To declare to you what a Saints Reſt is: is that which we are to ſpeake to now in the ſecond place, and in it we might diſcover to you the varieties of Reſt, which men have, which ſome call a Saints Reſt, but it is not ſo, but far from it.

Firſt,

First, There is a worldly reſt, like to the Glutton, *Luke* the 12th Chapter, and the 19th verſe, *Eat and drinke O my ſoule, and be at reſt, for thou haſt enough laid up for many yeares.* It is ſo with many men in theſe dayes, they are reſtleſſe till they have gained accommodation, either for wealth, or honour, and when that is accompliſhed they ſit downe, and are at reſt. But alas, this is not the reſt: ſee what God ſaith in the 20th verſe of that Chapter.

Secondly, There is a Naturall reſt; I doe not meane for the body, but for the minde: for many naturall men, walking civilly in the forme of their fore fathers, and are never within diſquieted, being no way from Heaven convicted, and poore hearts, they thinke all is well, becauſe they ſee no ill, and they conclude themſelves alive, becauſe they were never ſenſible they were dead. Theſe men goe out of the world as unſenſible as they came in, and ſo dye like *Nabal*, who ended his dayes like a ſtone, 1 *Sam.* 25.37. Deare friends, take notice that this reſt is a miſerable reſt, and not that reſt which we are to ſpeake to.

Thirdly, There is a Diabolicall reſt; ſome

ſome men are ſo ſwallowed up in ſinnes that they are never ſatisfied, nor at reſt till they are a ſinning. Like unto thoſe people in *Jeremiah* the 44. 17. who ſaid it was well with them when they offered up Incenſe to the Queen of Heaven: and there are two ſorts of theſe people. The one is thoſe who have lived ſo long in ſin, that their onely life and delight is in ſinning.* The other ſort are thoſe who have ſome inner checks of conſcience, by which they are diſquieted, and they to ſtop the mouth of that diſquieted minde, will make themſelves drunk with ſinning, and care not what time or money they ſpend to purchaſe a little peace, to expell that trouble, and that houre they can purchaſe that mirth, * or rather madneſſe, they are then at reſt. But alas, the reſt of theſe men is not onely ſinfull, but diabolicall, their condition is much to be lamented.

* Iohn 10. 3, 4.
Deut. 29. 19.
* Iſa. 22. 13.
Iſa. 56. 12.

Fourthly, There is a Legall reſt; I call it ſo, becauſe it is a reſt which men attaine to by their exact conformity to a Law, and not by their acquaintance with the Lord. I feare that many goe on in this reſt, thinking all is well, when alas there is no ſuch matter. They onely reſt

reſt upon the rotten reed of their owne Righteouſneſſe, and warm themſelves by the fire of their owne performance, but the concluſion will be reſtleſſe, for they will lye downe in ſorrow, *Iſaiah* the 50. and the laſt verſe. If theſe ſort of people are but exact in the forme of their performance, in anſwer of a Law or Letter, and that done all is well. They have no reſt till they doe perform, and when they have performed, they are at reſt. I would have Gods people reſtleſſe to performe duty, but not reſt in performing duty. I would have their reſt, as I know it will, carry them out to performe duty, but not to reſt upon their performance. Iob. 22. 3. Iſa. 64. 6.

Fifthly, There is a Phariſaicall Reſt: that is, when men take Reſt in a bare profeſſion, without any injoyment of the thing they doe profeſſe, this is phariſaicall: ſo it is alſo when men in their profeſſion walk up to gaine the applauſe of men*: theſe people have peace when they judge themſelves approved on, eſpecially by a profeſſing people, then all is well, but the leaſt cenſure there, doth exceedingly ſadden them; whereas thoſe ſoules which have reſt in that Reſt which is the Reſt of Saints, all the commendation

* Iohn 5. 42. Iohn 12. 43.

* Rom. 2. 29. 1 Cor. 4. 3. tion of men doth not heighten it,* nor the Cenſures of men groundleſſe doth not ſtraiten it. Therefore, Deare friends, conſider if Creature-ſmiles will increaſe your Reſt, and the frownes decreaſe it: your Reſt is but that which will end reſtleſſe.

Sixthly, There is another Reſt which comes more near to the Reſt of the people of God, and yet it is deceiving. I feare too many of the people of God, reſt in that Reſt. It is a Reſt which is ſeemingly, Evangelically, and a Goſpel reſt, but it is not ſo, and it doth conſiſt in theſe things.

Firſt, When men, who thorough a ſight of the great miſtakes of all other reſts, and doe by it condemn Phariſaicall Reſt to be but beggerly, and legal Reſt to be very empty, and the other ſorts of Reſts to be very fooliſh, and this they are brought to from apprehending a higher and more glorious diſcovery of God, in a way of free grace, and Goſpel-unfoldings; but in this they reſt, and therein their reſt is falſe, in that they reſt in the bare knowledge, and not in the thing knowne.

And they are ſatisfied by apprehending

ing truth ſo far as to condemne falſhood, and ſo reſt upon the act of condemning evil, but goe no further.

But in the cloſe of this, take notice thus much, that there is many times much pride in condemning pride there, and much ignorance in condemning ignorance there; and thus to reſt in condemning the fallacie of reſt, though men may thinke their ſpirits high, they are but low, and in the end it will appear reſtleſſe, and though they may be ſaved, yet this work with many others will be burnt, *Corinthians* the 1. and the 3. and the 12, 13, and 14 verſes.

Secondly, There are many people who are exceeding reſtleſſe till they have imbraced the external adminiſtrations of the Goſpel, and when they have done ſo they think all is done, and then are at quiet. Alas! if Chriſt be not as well formed in * you, as acknowledged by you, your condition is not leſſe, but more ſad; and though you thinke you are at reſt, your ſtate is reſtleſſe. * But no more of falſe Reſts, though much more may be ſaid; but a word or two of that Reſt, which is the reſt of Saints. *Gal. 4. 19. *Am. 6. 1.

Under the Law there were varieties of reſts,

rests, but all rests were swallowed up in one, as being the Anti-type of all those types: now this rest is the Lord Jesus Christ, as you may see at large in the 4th of the *Hebrewes:* Now when we say Christ is the rest of Saints, or a Saints sabbaoth, we are to looke upon Christ as one with God, nay very God, and is that Eternall Love and Life, which was and is for ever. It lives in God, and is communicated to the Creature by the Spirit of God, that Love is very God, as you may see in the first Epistle of *John*, the 4th and the 8th. For it's true, we may look upon Christ as the grand Ordinance of God, and so he is the streame, and not the fountaine, and so he is inferiour to the Father, as you may see, *John* the 14. and the 28 verse. Now so to rest in, or on Christ, is to rest in the streame, and not in the fountaine, and in a word, it is to rest upon an Ordinance, though it be the publique and grand Ordinance, yet in that sence he is an Ordinance. But a Saints rest is to rest in the sweet enjoyments of God in Christ: that foundation will stand, not onely now, but when Christ gives up the Kingdome to the Father, * then all streames will be gathered

* 1 Cor. 15.24.27.

thered up into the fountaine, and all beames will be gathered up into the body: then a Saint will not be unfeated in his Centre, but will be more glorious, for God will be all in all, and all in him will be one with him in that glory. Wee might ſpeak very large in reference to a Saints reſt, both as to the Author, and the matter, and the ſweet content a ſoule injoyes in that reſt, but what I have ſpoken is ſufficient to diſcover a Saints reſt to be unmoveable, to be matchleſſe and unalterable. O happy is that heart who is lull'd aſleep in nothing but in thoſe Loves, nor doth not reſt in any appearance, though in near relations, but upon the marrow of that mercy. Dear friends, thus to ſay is good, but they and they onely are happy, that doe injoy it, and they which doe injoy it are not able to expreſſe the tythe of what they injoy. As it is a peace, ſo it is a reſt paſt all underſtanding.* But no more of this ſecond thing. *Phil 4. 7.

Thirdly, We ſhall ſpeake a word or two what it is for a ſoule to withdraw from its reſt; and therein we might be very large, in reckoning up many particulars, but we ſhall briefly declare our thoughts

thoughts to it. (Deare friends) know, that all ſtartings from * God, either in ſpirituall communion, or externall withdrawings from any thing that is exactly Gods way (unleſſe God hedged up your way from it) is a withdrawing from reſt; nay, all our runnings out to, (or imbracing of) and living upon any thing beſides God, though ſeemingly it may have a Law to owne it, yet for us (ſo) to imbrace it, is to withdraw from reſt, nay all low and looſe actions or thoughts, * which are contrary to the minde of God, is a ſtartling from God, and a withdrawing from God, and ſo a going from reſt, for God is our reſt; all which I leave to you, to beg of God to informe you, and ſo far to overcome you, that you may for ever abide with God, from Gods abiding with you.

* Iſa. 59. 7, 8. Ier. 12. 13. Hoſ. 11. 1, 2.

* Pro. 24. 2. Gen. 6. 5.

I am now to ſpeak a word or two to diſcover the Reaſons and Grounds, why the beſt of Saints ſometimes are apt to withdraw from their reſt.

I ſhall reduce the Reaſons to theſe two.

The one is taken from themſelves, and the other is taken from God. As to the Reaſon relating to themſelves, we may reduce

reduce that to theſe two heads.

The firſt is the grand cauſe.

The ſecond is the accidentall or occaſionary cauſe.

As for the grand, it is becauſe there is darkneſſe, ſin, and corruption in the beſt of Saints.

That which is the reaſon why ſome men for ever ſtand in oppoſition to God, is, that which doth cauſe the people of God ſometimes to withdraw from God; it is the reliques of the old man that are not yet fully crucified, but ſtill move hel-ward and death-ward, to accompliſh its owne ends: and that this remaines in the beſt, you may ſee *Galathians* the 5th, and ſo alſo in the *Romanes*, the 7th and the 21. which made him cry out thus, the 24. *O wretched man:* And therefore all the people of God had need not onely to watch, * and walke humbly before God, but to live much upon God, for there is that in ſelfe which will carry the ſoule with a ſtrong ſtreame from its proper Centre. Now from this grand cauſe, there are many accidentall occaſionall cauſes flowing from it to cauſe a ſoule to withdraw from Chriſt, and they are theſe.

* Mat. 24. 42. Mat. 26. 41.

First, The hearkening to, or disputing with inclinations or temptations to sin, this was the occasion of *Eves* and *Adams* fal. To admit of a dispute with sin & temptation, doth very much strengthen temptation, and weaken us: and when the heart through the power of Christ doth make sudden resistance, it doth commonly conquer with little spoyle, or breach, upon its owne quiet and peace.

* Gen. 3. 1,2,3,4,5,6. Psa. 137. 9.

A dispute of sin admits of a familiarity with sin, and it gives sin opportunity to present new objects of delight, which never leaves till it hath drawne the fleshly part of the creature into a labyrinth where the heart is much lost: and then it hearkens unto any dictates that propound rest, and content; but this state is very dangerous, and the heart now begins to be sick, happy is that soule who is seasonably recovered, for there is no end of sins promises, nor no beginning of its performance, till in the end it brings forth death. *Romanes* the 9. and the 24.

Deare friends, minde this, and the Lord in mercy give you understanding to keepe at home, and not straggle abroad: I meane to live much with God, and in neere communion with his loves. No more of that.

Secondly,

Secondly, Neglecting ſociety with them that live with God, and to live in fellowſhip with them that are not acquainted with God, is a dangerous occaſion to cauſe the people of God to withdraw from their reſt. * *Joſeph* had never learned to ſweare by the life of *Pharoah*, had he not come into *Pharoahs* family, and ſhew me any place of Scripture where any of the people of God did ever withdraw from them that lived with God, and imbraced familiarity and ſociety with others, but they commonly fell before they returned. It is impoſſible to touch pitch, but to be defiled, 'tis not poſſible for a man to walk in a corrupt Aire, but he muſt ſuck in ſome of the corrupt fumes. Deare friends, in the cloſe I deſire you to mind this, not onely as a duty, but as a mercy, to be often with them that are often * with God. They are not onely Gods factors, offering and tendering varieties of diſcoveries of Light and Love, but they are Gods Merchants, nay their hearts are Gods Magazines, wherein he doth treaſure up varieties of the diſcoveries of his Light, Life, and Love.

* Gen. 42. 16. Pro. 1. 15. Pro. 6. 27, 28.

* Mal. 3. 16. Can. 1. 8 Heb. 10. 25. Col. 3. 16.

Truly did people know the worth of

the injoying Saints, they would not ſcorn them, but rather endeavour to purchaſe their ſociety. Deare friends, all I ſhall ſay to this, is, prize them that are precious to God, for their ſociety will be profitable to you.

Thirdly, Miſapplying the truths of God in Scripture, is an occaſionary cauſe many times of a Saints withdrawing from his reſt, as thus:

The Scripture clearly diſcovers, that all praying in an outward forme is but prating, unleſſe it flow from the ſpirit of God, and that is a * truth worth our owning, for if there be a thouſand words in our forme of prayer, if there be but ten words in that prayer which flow from the ſpirit, that's prayer, and all the reſt is nothing. Now this truth is falſly applied by two ſorts of people, and doth cauſe them to run into evill, and withdraw from God.

* Rom. 8. 16. ‖ Cor. 14. 15. John 6. 44, 45.

Firſt, Of thoſe who think all extemporary prayer is to pray by the ſpirit; when alas a man by meer naturall parts, and by meer acquired habits may be able to preach and pray in a forme extemporary, and yet not be acquainted with the Spirit of God, and their runnings from thoſe

thoſe ſet formes of worſhip, to thoſe Extemporary performances, is a great occaſion to boulſter many up in blindnes, and to cauſe them to Runne to a Reſtles Reſt.

Secondly, There are a ſecond ſort, and they are yet further Convinced, that all praying is ſo emptie without the Spirit of God, that they will not attempt the forme till the power move them, and upon that ſcore neglect the forme of prayer, may be weekes, moneths, yeares. Now, deare Friends, I muſt ſpeak a word to you, relating to theſe people, and then a word or two to them; as to you. Firſt, Be very tender of their perſons. Secondly, Beleeve the truth of this opinion, that nothing is prayer, but what the Spirit performes: for prayer truly and properly Conſidered, is nothing els but the Exchanges of Gods owne Language, and it flowes from God as well as it goes to God; Its not to alter God, but to change us. Now the miſtakes of theſe people lyes in the application of this truth: Therefore a word or two to them in theſe particulars following.

Firſt, Deare Friends, ſo many of you

as are of that opinion, I deſire you carefully and candidly to minde what I ſhall ſay as to that; for I ſhall deſire to ſay nothing, but what my Experience hath diſcovered to my own heart: And therefore in this firſt particular, take notice that I ſo owne this truth of God *(viz.)* that there is no prayer without the Spirit, that I cannot but acknowledge all other ſayings or ſpeakings to be but emptie and vaine: and yet in the ſecond place Conſider.

Secondly, Though God doth owne no prayer but what flows from his owne Spirit, and wee doe well to owne it ſo, yet it is better for us to waite for the power in the forme, then to waite for the power without the forme: and as it is our dutie to Conclude the forme when we want the power, to be but a dead Carcaſe; ſo it is ſomething dangerous to neglect waiting upon God for the power in the forme: And truly if wee well Conſidered it, there is reaſon for it.

For firſt, we know wee oftener finde God, or rather God findes us in the forme, then out of it, *Cant.* 1. 8. *Cant.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Cant.* 7. 12.

Secondly,

Secondly, It is as good to be imployed in the forme, as to imply our ſelves in that which is as bad or worſe, which I feare wee often doe when wee omit opportunities in lying at the Pooles mouth, waiting for Gods comming in.

Thirdly, Know this, that as it is dutie when the Spirit performes it, ſo it is no ſinne to imbrace the forme, waiting for power; ſo that in the Cloſe wee Conclude that it is no dutie, becauſe the Spirit did not performe it: I know the ſence of that will make Saints lye not Ieſſe but more low before God.

Fourthly, Deare Friends, I muſt needs tell you in the fourth place, that though that opinion be true, that is no prayer without the Spirit, yet know that that truth, with many others, are true in themſelves, yet if they are not as well truly apprehended, as truth apprehended, it is not a truth in power in us: and I would have you to take notice, that it is a very bad ſigne when the apprehenſion of this truth is accompanied with ſo long a neglect of the forme and power, as weekes, moneths, and yeares. For though the truth teaches that the forme

without the power is nothing, yet that Truth doth not leave the Soule without power long; for though it ſeemes to hide it ſelfe ſometimes for a ſeaſon, it alwayes comes with a double Inlargement: and therefore deceive not your ſelves: but the Lord give you power, as to apprehend Truth; ſo to apprehend Truth truly: and if ſo, the application will never admit of Libertie to Looſneſſe, but ſtrong Ingagements to walke Cloſe with God.

I might in this third particular about miſapplying of Truth, which is an occaſion of Cauſing many to withdraw from God. Wee might mention many more, beſides what we have named, as a Chriſtians freedome from the Law of a Chriſtians perfection: In him in whom perfection Lives: and alſo that no unfaithfullneſſe in the Creature, can deſtroy his union with the Creator. Theſe and many more glorious truths, which are to be beleeved by us, yet if they be not truly apprehended, and ſutably applyed, will be as well in particulars, as Chriſt is in the Generall, a ſtumbling blocke, and a Rocke of offence to ſome, as well as a foundation of Salvation to others.

others. But no more of the firſt Reaſon, why the beſt of Saints are apt ſometimes to withdraw from their Reſt.

The ſecond Reaſon is taken from God, God is pleaſed ſometimes not to throw downe, but to ſuffer Saints to fall, that they may ſtand more firmely in Gods power, and live leſſe upon themſelves. God in this deales like a wiſe Father, who is pleaſed ſometimes not to hold the Childe, but to let it ſlip, that it may ſee it ſelfe to be weake, and to know that his power of ſtanding is from the father. I feare many people look upon this Truth with a wrong Eye, and doe conceive that ſinne is not onely permitted, but cauſed by God. And they forme their Reaſon thus; All power is of God, in him wee act, move, and have our * being; if ſo then the very acting of ſinne muſt needs be of God. But as to theſe people I ſhall onely ſay thus much, They erre not knowing the truth, for the action is one thing, and the pollution of the act is another thing. Sin is the variation from a Rule in an Act: and though actions be cauſed by God, yet the pollution of the Act flowes from the ſickneſſe and ſoare which is in the Creature. But I ſhall ſay no

* Act. 17. 28. Rom. 11. 26.

no more of that, but beg of you to be tender, and carefull to avoyde the Imbracing of any ſuch thing, as to lay ſin upon * God; for he is Light, in whom there is no darkneſſe, and puritie, in whom is no pollution: and you may as well ſay, that the noyſome ſtinkes of a dung-hill doe flow from the Sunne, becauſe it ſmells when the Sunne ſhines upon it; as to ſay the ſinfullneſſe of an Act flowes from God, becauſe the Act flowes from the power of God: but I am confident, thoſe hearts who are Saintlike ſencible of ſinne, will not lay ſinne upon the Father, though he doth ſometimes ſuffer them to fall, that they may ſtand the faſter when he is pleaſed to raiſe them. But no more in anſwer to this Objection, nor yet to the Reaſons of the Concluſion, but a word or two of Uſe, and to Conclude.

* James 1. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

The firſt Uſe.

If it be ſo that the people of God are apt to withdraw from their Reſt in this ſence which wee have before diſcovered: O then what cauſe have all the people of God, not onely to walke humbly before God, but with care and watchfullneſſe endeavour to avoyde all occaſions that may

may occaſion their ſtumbling and withdrawing from *God. Wee might uſe many Arguments, but the thing it ſelfe is ſufficient; Know that the Eſtate of withdrawing is a reſtles Eſtate, and the further wee goe in that Tract, the way to returne will be the Larger, and without Returne there is no Reſt.

*2 Tim. 2. 22, 23. 1 Theſ. 5. 22. Mark. 13. 33. 35. 1 Pet. 4. 7.

The ſecond Uſe, is to Exhort the people of God, as to watch over themſelves; ſo to watch over each other; in anſwer to the Apoſtles words in *Heb.* 10. 25. 1 *Pet.* 4. 7. *If thy Brother be fallen, Reſtore him with the Spirit of meekneſſe, knowing thou thy ſelfe mayſt alſo be tempted*, Gal. 6. 1. Deare Friends, the practice of many in theſe times are quite contrary; for if they ſee one fallen, they will rather lay him lower, and unchriſtian him, and ungrace him rather, then with tendernes and teares endeavour to reſtore him. But, deare Friends, I beg of you to avoyde ſuch Imployments, and rather minde what a Goſpel-Spirit is, and with kindneſſe and care watch over each other: and if you ſee weakneſs, wants, or faylings, endeavour to heale, reſtore, and returne ſuch hearts.

This Uſe in the ſecond place is to Exhorta-

hort you, in relation to them which are not yet brought home to God, if you ſee any run on in ſinne, and commit iniquitie, Remember that the ſeed of that Ser-
* 1 Cor. 6. 11. pent dwells in*you: and know, that nothing but free grace hath made a diffe-
Rom. 11. 18. rence betwixt them and you, and if they
Gal. 2. 20. fall, and you ſtand, it is not you, but the power of Chriſt in you. And therefore this ſhould Exhort you to humbleneſſe and meekneſſe towards them, and with humbleneſſe and meekneſſe endeavour to diſſlave them, by mourning over them, ſeeing your ſelves in them, and ſaying when you ſee them commit Iniquitie, that ſin ſhould I commit, were it not from love and grace, which is not mine but anothers. The Conſideration of this would not onely cauſe us to walke meekly and humbly towards others, but thankfully before God: who hath been pleaſed onely through grace to make a difference.

The third Uſe, Is to Comfort thoſe poore hearts, who lye under the ſorrowes of their withdrawings from Reſt, and are apt to Conclude they belong not to it, becauſe they run ſo often from it. Deare hearts, Conſider, that the beſt of Saints ſome-

ſometimes are apt to withdraw from their Reſt. Therefore it * *David*, and *Paul* Complaine of being carried Captive by this body of ſin, well may you: Therefore be not diſcouraged, but know thy Condition is not alone. * Pſal. 51. 4. 5. Rom. 7. 23, 24.

Beſides, further Conſider, that thy Reſt longs for thee, as well as thou art Reſtleſs for it. Further know, that though thou art weake, and cannot goe to that, that will come to thee, and when it comes it will Conquer thee with kindneſſe, and not upbraid * thee for thy unkindneſſe, and thy weakneſſe will not nor cannot cauſe want in that to ſupply thine. Deare Friends, the Lord make your hearts conſider this that hath been ſaid, and if any be fallen, the Lord cauſe them Returne, and they that do ſtand, ſo ſtand as knowing they may fall, that ſo they may ſit faſt in that ſeate, which is a Saints Center and Reſt; but no more of this firſt Concluſion. * Jam. 1. 5. Joh. 6. 37. Iſa. 55. 1, 2. Rev. 22. 17.

The ſecond Concluſion in order is this;

Doct. *That heart which is made ſencible by the Lord, that he is withdrawne from his reſt, he is Reſtles till he doth Returne.*

In the proſecution of this Concluſion wee ſhall briefely ſpeake to theſe three things. Firſt,

First, Prove it to you by Scripture.

Secondly, Shew you the Reasons and grounds why a soule that is made sencible of his withdrawing from Rest, is restles till he doth returne.

Thirdly, A word or two of Use.

For the first, the Scripture is very cleere; The very Text it selfe shews how Restles *Davids* spirit was; for he cryes out, saying; *Returne unto thy rest, O my soule.* You may see him in the same posture in the 63 *Psalme*, and the first verse; where he cryes out in the sense of the want of God, saying; *His soule thirsted for God, and his flesh longed in a dry and thirsty Land, where no water was.* The words import much more; for they Imply as much as this; That his heart broke in longing, and that he looked upon his condition without a sencible view of God, to be without any satisfaction: Like a fish out of the water, that doth nothing but gaspe, and pant, longing for his owne Element, without which he cannot live: It is just so with that heart which hath ever tasted of Gods Love, cannot long Live without those Injoyments: though sometimes the best of Saints are apt to withdraw, yet when Light and Life appeares, Raising up

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a Remembrance of the former ſolace it had in Divine Loves, O it pants, groanes, and is Reſtles, till againe it is refreſhed with thoſe Injoyments; and it will ſay as *Sampſon* in another Caſe ſaid; *Give me her or els I dye.*

At your leiſure reade the fifth of the *Canticles*, you ſhall ſee where Chriſt came to the Spouſe in the beginning of the Chapter, and put in his finger at the hole of the doore, that is to ſay, he gave in ſo much Light, & ſo much remembrance of former Loves, which did not onely ſhew her where, and what ſhee was, but cauſed in her a Reſtleſnes, till ſhe found him whom her ſoule loved, and ſhe was ſo earneſt in the purſuit of his ſociety, that all the oppoſitions, reproaches, and ſmitings of the watchmen of the Citie could not take her off, but ſhe ſtill cryes out, and tells the Daughters of *Jeruſalem, that ſhe was ſicke of love*, and ſhe was never at reſt till ſhe had found him whom her ſoule loved.

Deare Friends, Look upon any place of Scripture, where any ſoule did withdraw from God, and is now by him made ſencible of that withdrawing, you will then there finde them very reſtleſs till they did returne. If

If you aske me the Reaſons for it, they are theſe:

The firſt Reaſon is implyed in the latter End of this verſe, which is the reaſon and ground *David* gives his ſoule to Returne to God: It is becauſe God hath dealt bountifully with him. That power of Life and Light that doth convince a ſoule of his withdrawing from God, doth raiſe up a remembrance and ſence of the former ſweetnes, plenty and bounty he injoyed in God, *Pſal.* 77. and the 6. It is that which is cleerly ſeene in the Prodigalls Expreſſions, *Luk.* 15. where he ſaith, *There is enough in my fathers houſe.* Deare Friends, the ſence of this is a conquering and over-coming power, and the rather becauſe that Light which preſents this remembrance, doth exceedingly plead and expoſtulate with the heart, telling it that it was not as now, when he lay in his Fathers boſome, *there he had bread enough*; he had there ſmiles without frownes, and was alwayes danled upon the knees of his fathers kindneſs, and was fed with marrow and fatnes: and then it will ask and demand of the ſoule, ſaying, What doſt thou here? Deare Friends, I am not able to tell you how theſe lively appearances of

of Gods precious plenty, doth break and wound the ſoule; That heart who ever lived under it, can and will ſay, that it is unexpreſſible how the heart breakes in longing after God: and how the ſence of his fullnes makes it Reſtleſs till it doth Returne.

The ſecond Reaſon, Why a ſoule is and muſt be Reſtleſs that is convinced of his withdrawings; Is becauſe that Light and Life, which is raiſed up in the heart, makes that part which is made ſencible of his withdrawings, not onely ſencible of the fullnes of God, but brings him into an union with God; Therefore I forme my Reaſon thus:

Every thing doth and muſt be eager in its running to its Center: God is the Center of the heart, and by the ſoule that is made ſencible, he is knowne to be ſo: Therefore it cannot but be earneſt in his running to God. Streames muſt returne to the fountaine, and beames to the body, & O how reſtles are theſe ſtreames which are hindered in their purſuit! It muſt needs be much more with that heart who is brought to know himſelfe one with * God: and alſo ſencible that he is with- *Jer. 3. 22. drawne from God. The ſence of this one- Cant. 5.

 nes Mat. 11. 22

nes and propriety in God, was the cauſe of *Davids* heart-breakings after God, *Pſal:* the 63. and the 1.

The third Reaſon, That Light and power which makes the ſoule ſencible of its withdrawing from God, doth not onely ſhew its onenes with God, and a fullnes in God, but alſo by it ſhews the emptineſſe of all things beſides God: Take notice it was the Argument the Prodigall uſed: that was that he was in an empty ſtarving Condition: truly there is very much of the ſweet dealings of God ſeene in that diſcovery; for God never ſhews this emptines, but by his own fullnes; and when he doth it, he doth not onely ſhew the emptines in ſomething, but in every thing beſides *himſelfe; For he preſents all things to be as they are, and even thoſe things which ſin and the Devill preſents pleaſant, and lovely, I meane all the wanton practiſes and withdrawings from God, and all glory, pleaſures and contents on this ſide God; and God doth doe it in a way of ſweet pleading with the heart, telling it, when it was at home in his boſom, it had all contents, which was not for a moment, but for ever, and the laſt would be beſt: and ſaying

* Ier. 3. 23, 24.

ing to the ſoule, What are all theſe de- *
lights & * Loves thou haſt ſpouſed with? Iſa. 41.
They ſpeake faire, but they end foule: 21, 22, 23.
and if they ſmile in the day, commonly Ezek. 23.
in the night they frowne: or if ſmile in 5. 22.
the night, in the day they frowne: All
content ends with the action, & all pro-
fit, pleaſure, and honour, ends with the
perſon, and place, and what was, is no
more, but all things are vanitie, and a
meere bubble. Can all the contents and
pleaſures procure peace in the day of a
ſtorme, or make thee well when ſicke, or
give thee life one houre when dead? No,
all things are ſo empty, not onely in
themſelves, but in their remembrance of
thee, that when thou ceaſeſt, it takes its
leave, as never manifeſting more * Love: * Pſal. 37.
Oh! it is not ſo, ſaith the Lord with me 10. 17, 20.
to thy heart: What I was I am, and ſhall Pſal. 34. 16
be for ever: and the laſt will not be the
leaſt, but the greateſt (O) the ſence of this
emptines thorough the diſcovery of Gods
fullnes, makes the heart exceeding reſt-
les, till it is ſeated in that Center. Friends,
I could wiſh my ſoule were able to diſ-
cover, how taking and over-coming this
kinde of dealing is with a poore broken
heart, but it is God alone that can make

out the fullnes of this to you. I ſhall ſay no more to the Reaſons, but ſpeake a word or two to the Uſes of this Concluſion.

The firſt uſe is an uſe of Information to informe us of two things, from what we have already ſpoke from this Concluſion.

Firſt, 'Tis to ſhew you how Reſtles that heart is to returne to God, who is really made ſencible of his withdrawings from God. It is eaſier to keepe a ſtreame from the fountaine, or a beame from the body, then to reſtraine ſuch a heart from his returning to God: Alas, God is not onely his Life, and ſo his Center, but he ſo lives by him that he cannot live without him. Thoſe dayes and nights wherein a heart is thus ſencible of his withdrawings, and hath no Refreſhings in his returning, they are dayes and nights of Death, and not of Life to ſuch a heart; and how ſad a Condition that is, and how Reſtles that Condition is, I leave to you to judge?

Secondly, You may ſee from what we have already ſaid, that this reſtles running out to God, doth ariſe from Gods making the heart ſencible of his withdrawing. Therefore this is to Informe us, that the power of a hearts returning to God,

is

is of God, * Oh what cauſe then have ſoules in that condition, to acknowledge the power to be of God? they cannot but cry out as *David*, *Pſalme* the 66. and the 16. *O come ſee what the Lord hath done for my poore ſoule.* The mercy and kindneſſe of God in this act, is beyond what any can expreſſe, but he that doth injoy it. Oh you that doe enjoy it, have cauſe for ever to ſpeak out Gods love. To convert a ſinner, and make him a Saint, is an eminent favour, but to returne and call home a Prodigall Sonne, is that which ſpeaks out much more of the power, kindneſſe, and unchangeable love of God: Oh you that have taſted of it, let your life ſpeak out Gods love, and I ſhall ſay no more to you but this that Chriſt ſayes, *John* the 5. and the 14. *Sin no more leaſt a worſe thing come unto you.*

*Can. 1.4. Joh. 6.44. Phil. 2.13.

In the next place, this may Informe us of the great miſtakes of ſome men, who in their writings and expreſſions declare that they are againe brought home to God, but yet they are ſo far from being reſtleſſe in their returne to God, that they rather reſt in their ſatisfying of others, then in their aſſurance of their entertainment with God. Alas, Gods mercy is

double and treble, in returning ſuch a heart to himſelfe, but the returnes of ſuch are hardly ſingle towards him, but to ſuch I ſhall ſay no more, but rather with teares beg that they may be ſenſible of the want of ſenſe, I meane of their withdrawings from God: I am ſure then they will be reſtleſſe till they doe returne.

Againe, This is to informe us, If it be ſo that thoſe hearts who are withdrawne from God, when made ſenſible, are ſo reſtleſſe till they doe returne, then 'tis no ſtrange thing why they get ſo much ground of them who have all this time ſtood, and not withdrawne. Chriſt ſayes, *Matthew* the 19, and the 30 verſe, *The firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt ſhall be firſt.* Alas, theſe ſoules that are thus recovered, are exceeding ſwift in their returnes; though know by experience what it is to capitulate with, or to give entertainment to, or to ſhake hands with ſin; the bitternes they have found out of their fathers heart, makes them cleave cloſe. *A burnt Childe dreads the fire.* Deare friends, obſerve it, that a child ſo ſoon as he hath gotten a knock, commonly doth not onely leane to, but lay hold of with both hands, the Mothers knee. Deare

Deare friends, I ſpeake this the rather, that any of you that ſtand, may not too much rejoyce and glory in your owne condition, over them that are fallen, as many in this poore Nation are, who through a gathered light liberty, have put themſelves in it before God brought them to it, and ſo have turned their liberty into Looſeneſſe. Theſe ſort of people doe either belong to God, or they doe not, but I am confident many doe, and if ſo, God will bring them home, and they will be reſtleſſe in their returnes. And take notice, you that God hath made yet to ſtand, that for ought I know theſe poore loſt hearts may get ground on you; and therefore doe not neglect your purſuite in ſpending time to cenſure them, but rather double your owne diligence in your owne purſuite, and endeavour with humility, care, and teares to recover them.

The ſecond Uſe is an Uſe of Comfort, to Comfort thoſe poore hearts who are ſadly fallen from God, and being made ſenſible, are reſtleſſe in their returnes, though their condition ſeemes in their owne eyes ſad, yet they have much cauſe of Comfort and Rejoycing, and that in theſe things.

First, Their condition is not alone; there is not onely a *David*, and a *Prodigall*, but many more who have ſadly fallen as well as they.

Secondly, Conſider that you are changed, God is not changed, for though we be unfaithfull, God is faithfull, and cannot deny himſelfe, as you may ſee, the 2 Epiſtle of *Timothy*, the 2, and the 13. *Malachy* the 3, and the 6 verſe.

Thirdly, Conſider that there is as much readineſſe in God to receive you, as reſtleſneſſe in you to be received by him. Doe but view what Chriſt ſayes about the loſt ſheep, *Luke* the 15. the 5, 6, and 7. verſes; there was greater rejoycing for the returne of that one, then was for the ninety nine, it was ſo with the loſt groat, and with the Prodigall more then his elder Brother, *Luke* the 15. and 30. verſe. All theſe Scriptures hold forth the great rejoycing God takes in, and the great readineſſe of Gods giving entertainment to a poore ſoule thus returned. I know the Deviil doth ſet upon ſuch a heart drawing Arguments, not onely from the breach of a Law, but their ſinning againſt Light and Love, which Arguments are of ſuch a power and force, ſufficient to ſinke any

any ſoule in the world, were it not for the abundance of love and kindneſſe given in from the Father, ſuitably at ſuch a ſeaſon. But, Oh deare ſoules, I ſpeake to them which are in ſuch a condition, doe not be diſcouraged, but conſider, not what you are in your ſelfe, but what you are in God, and at your leiſure view theſe Scriptures, *Jeremiah* the 3, and the 1 verſ. *Zech.* the 13, and the 1, *Iſay* the 1, and the 18, *Iſa.* the 43. the 22, 23, 24, and the 25, and 26. verſes, *Iſa.* the 44. the 21, 22. *Iſa.* 49. the 15, and 16. *Jer.* 31. and the 20. Read the 16. of *Ezekiel*, from the firſt to the laſt. 1 Ep. of *John*, 2, and the 1. *Mat.* the 11. and the 28. *Pſalme* 147. 3.

The Third and Laſt Uſe is an Uſe of Exhortation, to Exhort all that are thus fallen, and thus made ſenſible, that they give glory to God for giving of them a heart againe to returne; it's a double mercy, Oh what hath God done for you? he hath not dealt by you as you have dealt by him, *Ezek.* the 16. the 59, and the 60. verſes, but he hath returned love for hatred, and ſhewed himſelfe to be a God, though thou waſt but a creature; O praiſe him and prize him, looſe no time in ſpeaking out his Love, thou haſt loſt too

too much time already, all thy dayes are too little to declare what God hath done for thee. But I ſhall ſay no more of this uſe, nor of this concluſion, but I ſhall ſpeak a word or two of the laſt Concluſion, and ſo conclude. . . .

Pſalme

Pſalme the 116. and the 7. verſe.

Returne unto thy reſt O my ſoule, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

THe third and laſt Concluſion is from the ground of *Davids* reſolution, in theſe words,

For he hath dealt bountifully with me.

The Concluſion from thence is this:

That the knowledge of the fullneſſe and bounty of God, is the chiefe ground to turne a ſoule to God, which hath withdrawne from God.

I ſhall ſpeak very briefly of this, becauſe I ſhall have an occaſion in my ſpeaking to the third thing, *viz.* The Entertainment a ſoule finds with God, to ſpeake much of the bounty and plenty he injoyes in God. The word plenty implyes fullneſſe without any emptineſſe, readineſſe without any backwardneſſe, freeneſſe without reluctancy, to doe that which he is a doing: and upon all thoſe accounts

counts Gods bounty is fully and clearly
*Pſa.86.5. demonſtrated, * in the diſcoveries of him-
Pſal. 42.7. ſelfe to us, for he doth not onely tender
Pſal.13.6. grace freely, but in that holds forth a
Eph.1.23. ſupply fully, and in diſpenſing he doth it readily and delightfully. It is the joy and delight of God to give out Love to loſt hearts; never did any ſoule withdraw from God, apprehending a want in him, nor never doth a ſoule turne home againe to God, but through the knowledge of the bounty and plenty that is to be injoyed in him. That which moved and carryed on the Prodigal, was the remembrance that there was enough in his Fathers houſe, *Luke* the 15. and the 17. 'Tis that which here in this Text is fully diſcovered, for he calls upon his ſoule to turne ſaying, *He hath dealt bountifully with him.* If you look in the 5th of the *Canticles*, you ſhall ſee that that was the ground which drew the Spouſe after Chriſt, with ſo much eagerneſſe, it was the fullneſſe, and matchleſſe excellency ſhe ſaw in Chriſt, as you may ſee at large, from the 10 verſe to the laſt, and ſhe tels you that he is the chiefeſt of 100, verſe the 10, and ſo ſhee goes on, and in the laſt verſe, ſhe ſaith, *His mouth is moſt ſweet*, nay, he was altogether

gether lovely; this diſcovery of bounty and love, did not onely draw the Spouſe but did alſo cauſe the daughters of *Jeruſalem* to enquire after Chriſt, chapter the 6. and the 1 verſe, *Where is thy beloved gone, that we may ſeek him with thee?* this was the ground that cauſed *Iſrael* to return to God, *Jeremiah* the 3d, in the laſt part of the 22 verſe, *Iſrael* ſaith, *We come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God*; in the 3. verſe he tells you it was in *vaine to hope for ſalvation from the hills, or from the multitude of the mountaines, for in the Lord our God is the ſalvation of Iſrael*, which words imply, as a ſafety in God, ſo a ſufficient ſupply from God: So that from all theſe Scriptures you may clearly ſee, That the diſcoveries or knowledge of the bounty of God, doth draw and turne a ſoule to God, that is withdrawne from God. If you ask me the Reaſons, they are theſe.

Firſt, It is Gods way to conquer a ſoule, and crucifie a ſoule to things below himſelfe, by appearing more full and glorious then all things beſides him. * The Sun drawes up all mens eyes to admire it from other Lights that are below it, by out-ſhining and out-glorying every light

* Iſa. 40. 15, 16, 17, 18, 21.

light beſides it ſelfe. The Father never comes, but he brings ſo much in his hand and heart, that the ſoule cannot ſee or enjoy elſewhere.

Second Reaſon, It muſt needs be ſo, for that light and life which turns a ſoule to God, through the diſcoveries of God, doth preſent and diſcover God to be as he is: if ſo, then it muſt needs be a knowledge of the bounty of God, for God is bounty* it ſelfe. Whoſoever hath a view of God, muſt needs ſee all variety and plenty in him, for it is not onely of him, but ſo one with him, that we cannot view one, but we muſt view both, for there is all variety in unity, *Pſal.* 16. 11. *Revel.* 7. *ult.*

*Pſa. 113. 4, 5.
*Pſal. 86. 8.
Iſa. 46. 9.

Third Reaſon, As it is Gods way to preſent himſelfe ſo, and as it muſt needs be ſo, becauſe he is ſo, ſo there is a great neceſſity for it; for a ſoul is no ſooner in his way towards God, but ſin, and the Devil, with varieties of Arguments, doe endeavour to encounter the ſoule, and preſents it with varieties of objects, to perſwade the heart to bow downe, and worſhip it: it was the very ſame way the Devil took with Chriſt, as you may ſee in the 4th of *Matthew*, verſe the 8. and the

9.

9. *Luke* the 4, the 5, and 6 verſes. But take notice of all the Devil and ſin preſents, it is not onely a lye, but in the beſt it is but things relating to this tranſitory and empty being, but truly did not God ſpeak out that which the Devil and ſin cannot ſpeak out, the hearts of poor creatures would very much ſtumble, but the Father is pleaſed, not onely to unſpeak what the Devil ſaith, but to out-ſpeak and out-ſay whatſoever the Devil and ſin can ſay, and by it the Father is pleaſed not onely to put words into a Saints mouth, but alſo ability in his heart, by which the ſoule is made able to reſiſt ſin and Satan. I am ſure that heart which is acquainted with this condition, knowes what great need and neceſſity there is of thoſe diſcoveries, to ſupply him with ſtrength, when he is with temptation ſurrounded. But I ſhall ſay no more as to the Reaſons.

Obj. Some may Object, and ſay, What hath been ſaid to theſe Reaſons, holds forth ſo much, as if the drawings and diſcoveries of God, were the good we injoy by him, and not the Eſſentiall good that is conſidered in him, and if ſo, that kind of Love and Life muſt needs be ſelfiſh.

An.

An. In Anſwer to this Objection I ſhall preſent you with theſe particulers.

Firſt, Thoſe hearts that thus Reaſon, I feare are not acquainted with the diſcoveries of God, for if they are, they know it is impoſſible for a ſoule to injoy the ſtreames, but they muſt be ſwallowed up in the fountaine; and it is impoſſible for a heart to love God for loaves, and not for himſelfe, that is acquainted with his Loves. It is not here as it is in Creature-contents, for the ſoule is no ſooner in this ſenſe in Gods hand, but at the ſame time he is ſeated and centred in Gods heart (I ſpeak after the manner of men) but thoſe hearts which Live in the Loves of God, know what I mean.

Secondly, The bounty we receive by God, in a metaphoricall diſcourſe, ſeems to be diſtinct from God, but in Gods ſenſe, and that Saints ſee the bounty of God, and God, is both one, unleſſe you ſpeak of Gods bounty in a providentiall ſenſe, but according to our intent in this diſcourſe, God is love, and love is God, according to *Johns* words, the firſt Epiſtle of *John*, the 4 Chapter, and the 8 verſe; and ſo the bounty of God, is one with God, and God one with that, and he that loves

loves one, muſt love both, but not as two, but one (for they are one) But no more to the Objection.

A word or two briefly of Uſe, and ſo conclude.

The firſt Uſe is an Uſe of Reproofe, and of ſad Complaints againſt thoſe that are wantonly gone from God. If there be any ſuch here, give me leave to deſire you ſeriouſly to conſider your condition, and to weigh well from what you are fallen. *Was there not enough in God, why went you from him?* The truth is, that ſaying lyes ſad upon my owne ſpirit, yet give me leave to tell you, and my owne heart, there is not that abroad which we find at home, and whatever you may *be poſſeſt of, through the deluſions of a ſeeming delight in ſin, which prompts fleſh to plead for that ſinfull liberty. Yet know, though it may ſeem ſweet in the palate, when it comes to concoction it will be ſo far from communicating ſtrength to life, that it will bring forth nothing but ſorrow, weakneſſe, and death. Beloved friends, amongſt all the people in the world, that undervalue the bounty of God, and goe from him, none ſo deſperately dangerous as thoſe who have often

*Pro.20.1. Rom.7.11. 1 Cor.6.9. 2Tim.3.13 Heb.3.13. Iſa.57.21. Rom.6.23.

refreshed themselves with Gospel-discoveries, from whence they have injoyed much strength, and by it seem to trample upon all transitory contents, for these to goe again down to *Ægypt*, * and to shake hands with their old enemy, endeavouring to make friendship there, I meane with sin and corruption, their condition is very sad, and they are not able to give a reason for what they doe, if they would exactly and candidly examine their owne hearts, they would be ashamed: There is no soule that thus acts, but he is worse then *Esay*, who sould his Birth-right for a messe of pottage, * and worse then *Judas*, that sould Christ for thirty pieces of silver. Let the sinnes that they practice, bring all the honour, pleasure, and profit, it will not be able to weigh downe *Judases*, and *Esay's* portions; and doe but view what was the result of them, and you may see your selfe in them, and a great deale worse. Alas, *Judas* sould a Christ without, but you endeavour to sell a Christ within; *Esay* sould a portion that was in some sense but earthly, but yours is a heavenly. Oh it is a mercy that our title in heaven stands upon such a foundation, that we doe not retaine that,

*Isa. 33. 14. Heb. 6. 6. Heb. 10. 26.

* Heb. 12. 16. Mat. 26. 15.

that, but that retaines it ſelfe for us; and though we like the Prodigall change abroad, yet our portion with our Father is unchangeable at home. Dear hearts, the knowledge of this is no ground at all for looſneſſe, * but the ſence of this will exceedingly wound our ſpirits, when we are made ſenſible how ill we have dealt with him that deals well with us. O doe but conſider your ſelves under a diſpute with God, ſay he ſhould ſay unto you as he did unto the Church, *Iſaiah* the 5th, and the 4th, *What could I done more to you then I have done?* or *Hoſea* the 6th, and the 4th, *O Ephraim, What ſhall I doe unto thee, O Judah, what ſhall I doe unto thee?* Adding this, which in your owne hearts you muſt needs eqeaſt with, if you have experience of Gods bounty, *Did not I*, ſaith the Lord, *lay thee in my boſome, and carry thee in my arms, and* * *had thee often into my Wine-Celler, and refreſhed thee with flaggons of wine, and my banner over thee was love, didſt thou ever come to my boſome, and went away crying for want? Nay, whatſoever thou hadſt, thou mighteſt have had more, then why wouldſt thou goe from me?* Alas, what will you anſwer the Lord? O that the ſame effect upon ſuch a diſcourſe may be ſeene in you,

* Rom. 6. 1, 2.

* Can. 2. 4. Iſa. 40. 11.

you, that was ſeene in the people of *Iſrael*, the 2 of *Judges*, the latter part of the 4 verſe, When the Angel had reckoned up the kindnes and goodnes of God in the former verſes, The Text ſayth; *The people of Iſrael lift up their voyces & wept.* I know no Arguments can divert a heart who is gone from God, till God comes. My own experience proves that, or els I ſhould uſe many Arguments; but I ſhall at preſent ceaſe, onely mourning over them, deſiring the Lord thorough the diſcoveries of his Bounty to returne them, then they will ſee the truth of what I have heere ſaid. But I ſhall forbeare, and ſay no more to this Uſe.

The ſecond Uſe, Is an uſe to Exhort all thoſe hearts that have withdrawne from God, and thorough the diſcoveries of his bounty are brought home againe to God, to bleſſe and praiſe God. O what hath God done for your poore ſoules; nay, Conſider not what he hath done, but how he did it? It was thorough a diſcovery of his owne bounty: he might have done by you, as you have done by him, but alas, he cannot, he remembers the contract he made with thee in thy youth, *Ezekiel* the 16. and the 59 and 60 verſes.

You

You have great Cauſe for ever to ſpeake out in your Life the kindneſſe and love of God, who is pleaſed not onely to lay up a portion in his bounty for you, but thorough the diſcoveries of his bounty to bring you home to him, when after you have done all the ill you can againſt him, God doth moſt Eminently appeare in this to be a father not onely free and full, but unchangeable: O declare where-ever you come the unſearchable mercy, and kindneſſe of God, how often have you frowned upon him, but he ſtill ſmiles upon you? you have runne from him, but he runs after you. And though you have cauſed him to ſtand knocking at the doore, begging entertainment, till his head was filled with dew, and his lockes with the dropes of the night, *Canticles* the 5. and the latter part of the 2 verſe. O Conſider this, and as he hath prized you, prize and praiſe him, and remember that when he returnes you, he doth not onely bring you to bounty, but thorough the diſcoveries of bounty he returnes you. The worke is his, doe not onely praiſe him, but lye low before him, Conſidering how much you are bound to him, and goe no more from

God; But I ſhall ſay no more to this uſe, nor to this Concluſion, but the Lord make you ſencible of what hath been ſaid. Beloved Friends, I did engage my ſelfe to make knowne to you what the Lord hath made knowne to mee, as in relation to the unſupportable burthen of ſinne to a ſencible heart, and the reſtles longings of a Soule to returne to God, who is ſencible of his withdrawing from God; So alſo to diſcover in the third place, the ſweet Entertainment that the ſoule finds with God when he is brought home. As I deſire to declare ſutable to what God hath declared to me, ſo I deſire to ſpeake it from that Scripture, in and by which the Lord was pleaſed to ſpeake it forth to me, by which he did very much refreſh and encourage my poore and unworthy Spirit: The Text is in theſe words following.

A Diſ-

A Diſcovery of the ſweet and unexſpected Entertainment that wandring hearts meet with in their Returnes to God.

The Prodigalls Entertainment with his Father diſcovered.

Luke the 15. and the 20 verſe.

And he aroſe and came to his Father, but when he was yet a great way off, his Father ſaw him, and had compaſſion, and ran and fell on his neck and kiſſed him.

BEloved Friends, Theſe words doe cleerly and ſweetly Anatomiſe the tendernes of Gods affection, as he is a Father; and the truth is, thoſe hearts that doe by the Spirit of the Lord, Really view God in theſe words as he is preſented, cannot but as a Sonne be melted and overcome in the ſence of the Fathers kindneſſe. As for the firſt part of the words, Concern-

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ing the Prodigalls riſing and coming towards his Father, I ſhall not ſay any thing, having ſpoken at large what is there included in our former diſcourſes. I ſhall onely ſpeak to the unexpected Entertainment the poore Prodigall found with the Father, and that is implyed in theſe words; *But when he was yet a great way off, his Father ſaw him, and had compaſſion, and ran and fell upon his necke, and kiſſed him.* All which doth wonderfully manifeſt the full, free, and tender kindneſſe of God, to unkinde Creatures.

Before we come to ſpeake of the Entertainment it ſelfe, wee might ſpeake ſomething of the party Entertained: And as to him we might ſay ſomething of his reſolution to come, his preamble in coming, his apprehenſions about his coming, and how much his Entertainment did Extend all: All which you may ſee in the dependance of theſe words on the foregoing verſes: but I ſhall paſſe over that, and onely ſumme up all in this generall Concluſion, which wee ſhall obſerve from the words as they have dependance upon the former verſes.

Doct. *That ſoule which is brought home to the Father, through a ſence of his owne wandrings,*

wandrings, meets with unexpected Entertainment with the Father when he comes.

If you reade the former verſes, you will not finde the Prodigall expecting to meet the Father before he came to the Father: And for the Father to runne when he onely went. And for the Father to fall upon his necke before he fell downe before his Father; Nay his Father kiſſed him before he could confeſſe how unworthy he was of a kiſſe: truly the very thoughts of this is a Cordiall ſufficient to put Life to a dying Spirit, and doth exceedingly advance the glory of Gods grace and Love: Eſpecially if you ſee how God by this Love doth not onely give unexpected Entertainment, and ſo in that went beyond the apprehenſions of the Prodigall, but he did alſo prevent the Prodigall in his practiſe; for the poore wandring heart being ſencible of his wandrings, and what a breach by it he apprehended he had made in his Intereſt in his Father: he now reſolved to doe that which all poore Soules in the like Condition, doth endeavour to doe, in their returning to God, to prompt their expectation of their Entertainment with God: they reſolve to doe and ſay ſome-

thing to make way for their Entertainment. As the Prodigall here in theſe words; *I will ariſe and goe to my Father, and will ſay, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and againſt thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Sonne, make me as one of thy hired ſervants.* Poore ſoules, when they have theſe preparations and reſolutions, they have ſome hopes that God by it may be wrought upon to manifeſt Love againe. Dearely Beloved, that God may ſhew you the emptines of this foundation: ſee how God goes beyond the poore Prodigall: Before ever he ſaid any thing, the Father ſaved him; and when he did but come the Father did runne, and before he ever performed his reſolutions, his Father tranſcendently anſwered his exp ctation and deſires, falling on him and kiſſed him before he fell downe in the preſence of his Father: Beloved, the Father is God and not man, he moves all, but is mov'd by none; preparations are wrought by him, but they are no Cauſes moving and procuring Entertainment with him *. Effects of his Love cannot be the Cauſe, & this would all Prodigalls ſay in their Returnes, if they were ſencible what God is: and they will be drawne to acknowledge

* Job 32. 6, 7. Pſal. 16. 2.

ledge it from their Injoyment of the unexpected Entertainment with the Father. Poore *David*, when he had ſinned againſt God, ſaid, *He would confeſſe his ſinne, but*, ſaith he, *when I ſaid I would confeſſe, God forgave*, Pſal. 32. and the 5. So that when he did onely Reſolve to confeſſe, before it was done, God did actually forgive. The very ſame you may ſee in *Ephraim*, *Jerem.* 31. 18, 19 verſes, he there bemones himſelfe, being aſhamed and confounded, thorough a ſence of his owne unſutablenes, crying out to be turned to God, as knowing himſelfe undone without him: but ſee in the 20 verſe what a tranſcendant and unexpected Entertainment he found with God, Expreſt in theſe words; *Ephraim my deare Soune, is he a pleaſant Childe, for ſince I ſpake againſt him, I doe earneſtly remember him ſtill, therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, I will ſurely have mercy upon him ſaith the Lord.* O what ſweet ſoule melting Expreſſions are theſe! It was an Entertainment far beyond *Ephraims* Expectation; and as *Ephraim*, ſo all poore ſoules who have ſtrangely wandred from the Father, and are aſhamed in their Returnes to beg Entertainment, even in the loweſt degree. They undoubtedly ſhall be

ſweetly Entertained, beyond what they doe or can expect. If you aske me the reaſons why wandring hearts in their Returnes finde Entertainment beyond their Expectation; The reaſons are theſe.

First, Becauſe Gods thoughts are not our thoughts: *Eſay* 55 the 8 and 9. but as the heavens are above the Earth, ſo are his thoughts above ours, in relation to the diſpenſation of mercy to undone ſoules. The confirmation of which truth is Gods intent in that Chapter, and thoſe Verſes. Alas, the poore heart, that is wounded in the ſence of his owne ſins, and deſires nothing more then Entertainment, if it were but to look upon God at the doore, and to be owned by him, though he did not ſit at the Table with him, and had but a ſmile, though not kiſſes, and lookes of Love, though no Imbraces; Though as a Servant, yet he would thinke himſelfe happy. Dearely Beloved, You ſhall not onely ſtand at the doore, but * ſit downe at the Table, and not onely have ſmiles and lookes of Love, but varieties of Kiſſes and Imbraces; and Entertainment far beyond thy Expectation; beleeve it to be ſo, for Gods thoughts are not thine.

* Can. 2. 4. Cant. 3. 10. Iſa. 62. 5.

Second Reaſon; Every poore wandring ſoule

ſoule in his Returne is apt to look upon God thorough himſelfe, if not thorough his Corruptions, yet thorough the narrow meaſure of his owne Reſolutions and Reformations: and doth meaſure his mercy and Entertainment in the Compaſſe of thoſe narrow Limits: But alas, that is not a glaſſe to behold God in, or a meaſure to meaſure his mercy by. Sutable to God is his kindnes, and Love, and ſutable to that meaſure is our entertainment. The Creatures Entertainment is ſutable to its apprehenſion, & apprehenſion is ſutable to the glaſſe it apprehends the object in. Now ſeeing the poore creature eyes God, & his entertainment with God, thorough the narrow Compaſſe of himſelfe, his Expectation muſt needs be low, and fall much ſhort of that which a wandring ſoule returned, finds when he is ſencibly poſſeſt with it: but no more of the Reaſons, but a word or two of Uſe.

Firſt Uſe is an uſe to Reprove the people of God, who after they have wandered from God, and are thorough reall Convictions returning home to God, yet are feareful and queſtion their entertainment with God, thinking he muſt needs deale hardly with them, who have dealt

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* Pſal. 77. 9
Pſal. 42. 9.
Pſal. 31. 12
Iſa. 49. 14.

ſo unkindly with him *. Deare Friends, I muſt confeſſe the ſtate and condition of ſuch poore ſoules is much to be pittied, for they are ſurrounded with temptations in a double and treble ſence; yet give me leave to Reprove them, as Chriſt ſaid in another Caſe, *Matth.* 22. 29. *You erre not knowing the Scriptures:* So you feare your entertainment, not knowing the endeared affections that live in God, when once you come to be poſſeſt with it, you will Reprove your owne Spirits, and ſay what I now ſay to you: Was it not enough to ſin againſt Love, but muſt you now ſin in queſtioning Love? Was it not enough to ſin in running from God, but muſt you now ſin in thinking God will run from you? Was it not enough for you to ſin in clouding the nature of a Sonne, but muſt you now ſin in queſtioning the nature of the Father? O leave off thoſe diſputes, and goe with boldnes, beleeving that God is what he was, though you are not ſo; and know, your entertainment will be farre beyond what you doe or can expect.

A ſecond Uſe is an uſe of Comfort and Conſolation to all poore broken Spirits who have wandred from God, and thorough

rough a ſence of their own unkinde dealings with the Father, they are aſhamed to looke upon him, and afraid to goe up to * him, and yet cannot live without him. There is great Comfort to theſe poore broken Spirits, in the Conſideration of the ſweet entertainment that poore wandring hearts finde in their Returne to God: Know that the Father is God, and not Man. It will goe better with you then with *Heſter* in her deſperate attempts to the King *Ahaſuerus*, in the 5 of *Heſter*, ſhe according to a Common Expectation looked for nothing but Death: but ſee in the 2 and 3 verſes, how the King holds forth his Scepter, and tells her that her Requeſt ſhould be granted, if it were to the halfe of his Kingdome: an Entertainment beyond her expectation. * Luk. 18. 13.

Deare hearts, know that in your approachments to the Father, he will not onely hold out a Scepter to you, but fall upon the neck of you, and will not anſwer your deſires to the halfe, but to the whole of his Kingdome, for all ſhall be yours; and he will not onely ſpeake words of kindneſſe to you, but will give you power to ſpeak out your unkindnes before him; he will not onely paſſe by,

and

and pardon your adulterous withdrawing from him, as you may ſee *Jeremiah* the 3d, at the beginning of the Chapter, but he will alſo *heale your back-ſlidings*, v. 22. And though you with the Prodigall, deſire to be but a Servant, he will entertaine you as a Son, and before you confeſſe, he will pardon, and before you acknowledge how unworthy you are of Love, he will manifeſt Love; he will not onely entertaine you, expecting exactneſſe in the future, but he will alſo meet you, and kiſſe you with the kiſſes of his mouth, ſaying, *Thou art mine*, * and he will pay off all the old ſcores, and arrearages, that are produced by your former Ramblings from a cloſe Communion with his Love. At your leiſure reade thoſe words, *Luke* the 10. 34. where you ſee Chriſt did not onely find them in their bloud wounded, but he alſo with great pitty and love, powres in oyle, binds up their wounds, takes them up, and carries them to his owne Inne, which Inne was Goſpel Imbracements in the heart of God: and what Entertainment was at that Inne, you may ſee, it was far beyond the Expectation of the poore wounded Soule. The Caſe is thine, I am certaine thy

* Iſa. 43. 1. Iſa. 44. 1, 2 Iſa. 45. 4.

thy condition cannot be worſe, and know your Entertainment will be as good. It was a wounded ſoule who was ſtript and left naked, though he was alive, yet he lay in his blood, and though he was beloved, yet he was very unlovely: he was robbed and ſtript of all, and had no accommodation but his owne blood and ſoares. Deare hearts, can your condition be more ſad? (that is impoſſible) And what encouragements or comforts can you propound to your ſelves, but they will be doubled and trebled with God? He will not onely meet you when you meet him, but he will meet you before, that ſo you may meet him; he will not love you becauſe you are lovely, but he will love you, being loathſome, to make you lovely, * and he will not entertaine you when you come, but he will meet you before you come, and anſwer you before you ask. O what a comfort is there to poore ſoules that deſire nothing more, then to be re-entertained with God? I beſeech you conſider ſeriouſly what hath beene ſaid, and let not the diſpute with your owne unworthy heart, nor the dictates of the Devil, draw a cloud over Gods kindneſſe, or hinder

*Ezek. 16. 8. 14. Deut. 7. 7, 8.

your confidence in your Entertainment: God takes nothing ſo ungratefull, as to queſtion his kindneſſe. Truly it is impoſſible for any one, though with the tongue of men and Angels, to ſpeak out the tenth part of Gods tender kindneſſe, and ſweet imbracements, to a poore unworthy heart that is gone from him, and now returned againe; did broken hearts know what great delight God takes in healing broken ſpirits, * in making the poore rich, and ſetting at liberty them that are in priſon, and to exalt them that are low, and to recover them that are loſt, they would not diſpute ſo much againſt the imbracements of grace, and mercy. At your leiſure read the 66. of *Eſay*, and the two firſt verſes, the 16. of *Ezekiel*, the 11 of *Matthew*, and the 28. verſe. It is endleſſe to reckon up the great heart-earnings, and the tender and ſweet entertainments that God gives to poore unworthy ſpirits, beyond what they can expect. The Lord give you power to believe it, and cauſe you to rejoyce in it with *joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.*

*Pſ.147.3. Mar 5.3,4. Mat.11.28.

The third and laſt Uſe is an Uſe of Exhortation, to exhort all thoſe that are withdrawne from God, and are againe returned,

returned, O take heed of wandring any more; *Sinne more leaſt a worſe thing come unto you,* * know that the ſecond withdrawing will be a great deale worſe then the firſt, and further conſider, if you are really brought home, what panges and throwes you had, before delivered, and know it was enough, nay too much, that you have trampled upon Gods kindneſſe ſo long; and beſides, take notice, it is very dangerous and deſperate to make ſecond attempts of withdrawing from God.* Alas, you cannot have better proviſion abroad, then you have at home, (Why will you goe?) *Jacob* reproved his Sons, and ſaid, *Why looke you upon one another, is there not bread enough in Ægypt? Gen.* 42. 1, 2. But I ſay unto you, why will you returne back againe to *Ægypt?* Is there not delight enough in *Canaan?* It is better to abide with your Father and friends, then to ſhake hands with Enemies that harbour nothing in their hearts, but darts of death (as ſin doth) *Romanes* the 6th, and the laſt. O, I beg of you to conſider what hath been ſaid, and the Lord ſo diſcover it to you, that you may be overcome by it, and ſo endeared to it, that you may never again

*Joh. 5. 14.

*Heb. 6. 6: Heb. 10. 26, 27.

goe from God, but for ever dwell with him, O it is good to be there.

I ſhall ſay no more to this Uſe, nor to this firſt Concluſion, but come to ſpeak briefly a word or two from the words in order as they lye.

The words are theſe.

> *But when he was yet a great way off, his Father ſaw him, and had compaſſion, and ranne and fell on his necke, and kiſſed him.*

The firſt Doctrine from theſe words, *He ſaw him a great way off, and had compaſſion on him*, is,

Doct. *Large diſtances will not cauſe ſo great a diſdaine, but that the leaſt reall movings towards God, is eyed and imbraced by him, with great compaſſion.*

The word *a far off*, is a metaphoricall expreſſion, it doth not imply any thing that doth deny Gods omni-preſence, but implies & holds forth thus much, that the poor Prodigall was very low, and very far from that ſtate or frame of heart, wherein he did apprehend to meet God, and the truth was, there was ſo little and ſmall a beginning, of what in compariſon

riſon ought to have been, and alſo was, when he was further enriched with commings in of God, and in that ſenſe alſo he was a great way off. How far off think you thoſe people were, in that ſenſe which the Lord ſpeaks of, in the 42. of of *Iſaiah*, and the 3. Concerning the goings out of his grace and love in Chriſt, he tells you he *will not breake the bruiſed Reed, nor quench the ſmoaking Flax:* The words imply a great deale more then is there expreſt, for they doe imply thus much, That if there be but ſo much fire (that is to ſay, ſo much grace) as cauſes ſmoak, though the flame be not diſcerned, God will runne through the ſmoak, and imbrace the fire, he will by no meanes quench it, but nouriſh, and cheriſh it: and if there be but ſo much beginnings of life, as to give a ſoule the denomination of a Reed, though it be a bruiſed Reed, which commonly men caſt away, as being not worthy of the owning, yet God will owne it, and by no means reject, but imbrace it. Beloved, all this holds forth thus much, that the leaſt and loweſt motions towards God, if reall, are imbraced by him. How far off doe you think *Ephraim* was, *Hoſea* the 11

and

and the 3, when God taught him how to goe, leading him by the arme, and laid meat unto him, but he knew not that the Lord led him. *David* in the firſt of the *Kings*, and the 18th, had a thought in his heart, to build a Houſe to God, but it was onely a thought in his heart, not brought up ſo far as to expreſſion, or action, yet the Lord pierces through all, and comes into the ſecret Cabinet of *Davids* heart, and finds thoſe thoughts, and tells him it was well that it was in his heart. How ſweetly did God imbrace thoſe thoughts, though they were a far off from the act of doing, for it was Gods intent he ſhould not doe it. Beloved, how far off doe you think thoſe hearts are, whom the Lord ſpeaks of in the 50. of *Iſaiah*, and the 10. God there ſends comfort and conſolation to a people that feare him, and obey his voyce, but alas, it wat a far off, for the Text ſaith, they were a people that *walked in darkneſſe, and ſee no light*, that is to ſay, they were ſurrounded with ſorrowes and trouble, and had no comfort, but though they had not ſo much light as to rejoyce in Gods Love, yet God in his Love, runs out to meet them, rejoycing over them, and imbracing

bracing them in that condition with great compaſſion.

If you aſk me the Reaſons why *the Lord doth eye and take notice of ſuch ſmall movings towards him, and doth imbrace them with great compaſſion, though a far off*, the Reaſons are theſe.

The firſt Reaſon is, becauſe the beginnings, as well as the * perfecting of any good in the creature, is of God, it being therefore one with him, it muſt needs be owned by him. The leaſt deſires, or ſmalleſt groanings, or heart-breaking after God, though it be but a deſire to deſire, or longing to long really after God, it is that which God owns, and he cannot but doe it, for it is a ſtreame that flowes from no fountaine but his owne fullneſſe, he is a Father that muſt and will owne his owne child, though covered with a ragged coat; my meaning is, if there be the leaſt ſpark of life in a poor groaning heart, groaning after Love, and though it doth but groan and ſigh, and cannot expreſſe it ſelfe, but with poore, ragged, and tattered expreſſions, yet God will imbrace it, and why? becauſe it flowes from himſelfe, *Romanes* the 8. the 26. & 27. O what comfort and ſweet encou-

*Phil. 1. 6. Heb. 12. 2.

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rzgement is this to poor broken ſpirits, were they but ſenſible.

The ſecond Reaſon is taken from the nature of God, which is ſo free and ſo ready, and prone to ſhew mercy, that he longs and waites to ſhew mercy, *Iſa.* the 30. 18. It is the delight of his ſoule to meet with objects to manifeſt Love. The ſame pity that is in Parents, is tranſcendently in God, if the Child cannot ſpeak but cry for the dug, the mother will take it up, and lay it in her boſome, and if it cannot ſtand, ſhe will carry it, and hold it, dandling it upon her knee, delighting to ſerve that then, more then in the ſervice ſhe expects from her Child afterwards. This is eminently in God, * for he delights more in diſpenſing mercy, then in receiving ſacrifices from us; and the Reaſon is, becauſe he is made up of it, his nature prompts him to it, he delights in it.

*Iſa. 19. 15
Mic. 9. 11.
Mat. 12. 7.

The third Reaſon we may draw from the promiſe of God. Beloved, if you look upon all the tenure of Gods promiſes, they run out to poore, low, undone, and broken ſpirits. At your leiſure view theſe Scriptures, *Iſaiah* the 55. the 12. *Iſaiah* the 66. the 2. *Matthew* the 5. the

5. the 3, 4, 5, 6. verſes. *Matthew* the 11. the 18. Truly it is in this, as in the mountaines, who give downe their water to their valleyes, that are very much below, and far from them; ſo the high and glorious love of God, in the promiſes which are the Goſpel-mountaines which the Prophets often ſpeake of, they give out their ſweetneſſe and marrow to low, poor, undone, and broken ſpirits, though a far off, and much beneath them, that is to ſay, they are not yet come up to that height of knowing, beleeving, and conforming, which the Goſpel requires. They have eyes, but they are dim, onely ſee men like trees; they have mouths, but they are very narrow, that they cannot be otherwiſe fed, then with milk, like Children, *Heb.* 5. 12. Yet God will in Goſpel-diſcoveries nouriſh them there, and communicate diſcoveries anſwerable to that ſtrength he gives them to receive it, *Mark* 4. 33.

The fourth Reaſon why God will imbrace poore low ſpirits, and that with compaſſion, though a great way off, it is that he may by it bring glory to his own grace and love, it is that which the Apoſtle drives at in *Romanes* the 3, 4, 5 Chapters,

ters, where he diſcovers the ground why God juſtifies the ungodly, and diſpenſeth grace freely to unworthy creatures, it is that no fleſh may glory in his preſence, and that his grace alone may be exalted,* were there any good in the creature, before God loved it, we ſhould be apt to conceive that there were reaſon why God ſhould love us, and ſo ſacrifice to our owne goodneſſe; but when the ſoule is ſenſible that there is no goodneſſe in it to move God, but ſees that all good muſt flow from Gods love, as well as to be a cauſe to carry on Gods love, it is then brought to lye low before God, and to give all glory to him. Had the Prodigall performed his Reſolutions, and brought them forth to practice, before God met and imbraced him, Gods grace and love had not been ſo naked, and appeared ſo glorious as now it doth.

*Deut. 7. 6, 7. Pſa. 50.15. Iſa 25. 1, 2, 3, 4.

But I ſhall ſay no more as to the Reaſons, but a word or two briefly to this Concluſion.

The firſt is an Uſe of Comfort to all poore ſoules, who through a ſenſe of their owne unworthineſſe, and unkindneſſe towards God, are exceedingly broken and caſt downe in their owne ſpirits, apprehending

apprehending that they are at ſo great a diſtance from God, that they ſhall never meet with him. Let all ſuch know, that God doth ſee them, and will imbrace them with great compaſſion, though a far off. The heart cannot be ſo low, but the high God can reach it, and they cannot be ſo unworthy in their own eyes and ſo great a diſtance from God, but he that is infinit in mercy and kindneſſe, can and will meet them. Therefore, Beloved friends, if there be any of you in this condition, conſider what hath been ſaid of Gods dealings towards *David*, and his kindneſſe in diſpenſing mercy, according to that which we have already ſpake of in *Eſay* the 42. and the 3. the 5. of *Eſay*, and the 10. and alſo the deare and ſweet carriage of the Father towards the Prodigall, which Scripture is written for thy learning, that through faith and patience thou mighteſt have hope. Beloved, know, that God is the ſame God ſtill, retaining the ſame endeared love and pity, to poor and undone ſpirits, as I know it is the Devils way to prompt poore hearts, preſenting varieties of fancies to draw them from God, and when withdrawne, hee uſes all means to keep them from return-

ing, either by preſenting new objects of delight in ſin, or by blinding and ſtifling their conſciences through often ſinning; if that and many other wayes will not doe, rather then faile, if he ſees any conviction lyes upon them from God, or his word, he will cauſe them to queſtion the truth of both, but if that way will not take, he will goe in a more fine ſpun way, and endeavour to draw wrong notions from a Saints liberty, to prompt them to looſeneſſe; but for all this, if he ſees God will bring them home through a ſence of their wandrings from God, then he will lay load upon load, bringing all their ſins to their ſence, to multiply their ſorrows, and to cauſe them to ſee their diſtance between God and them, ſo great, as if it were impoſſible ever to meet.

Beloved, if this was or is your condition, know you are ſuch a ſoule that God did, and ſtill doth, ſee and imbrace with great compaſſion, though a far off. And therefore be not diſcouraged, but hold up your head, for your redemption draweth * nigh: And take notice, that God ſees you, when you doe not ſee him, and though you cannot rejoyce before him, yet he in his love rejoyces over you; and he

*Lu.21.28 Iſa.42.16. Iſa.29.18, 19. Iſa.35.5, 6.

he hath long Lines of Love to Embrace a poore heart, though they be a far off. The Lord make you to beleeve it, that you may rejoyce in it, and live up to his Love in the benefit of it.

The ſecond and laſt Uſe is an Uſe of Reproofe to many of the people of God, who in their practice walke very unlike God in this thing; for they are ſo farre from meeting or minding a poore Soule that is a farre off, that they will not ſo much as caſt an Eye of Encouragement upon them, nor give out any diſcoveries of Compaſſion to them. And of theſe ſort of people, there are theſe two, which principally I will ſpeake to.

The firſt are thoſe who in their apprehenſions have attained to a high diſcovery of Light, and Enjoyments of Love; yet cannot nor doe not manifeſt any endeared affection to poore groaning Spirits *, who are not come up to that Light and Love. Truly, I dare not Cenſure theſe men, but give me leave to Cenſure their ſinne, and tell them their walking lookes very much unlike Gods Love. I feare they have forgotten their Rocke from whence they were hewen, or the varieties of Gods dealings with them in the Wilderneſſe, before

* Phil. 2. 5. Jam. 3. 17.

before they came into the good Land.

O remember beloved, if any of you be
*Rom. 11. 20 1 Cor. 10. 12. * ſuch, that though you now ſtand, you may fall, and though you are high, you were low, and though now ſtrong, you were weake: and further, Conſider that your ſtrength is not your owne, and ſeriouſly weigh what the Apoſtle ſaith to the Gentiles, *Rom.* 11. 18, 19, and 20 verſes. And further, minde what *Paul* ſaith of himſelfe, concerning the Joy and Comfort he had more then others, it was not for himſelfe alone, but to Comfort others with the ſame Comforts, the 2 Ep: of the *Cor.* the 1 and the 4. O therefore ſutable to the practiſe of thy Father, lend thy helping hand, and goe meet, encourage & embrace poore groaning Spirits, meeting them with compaſſion, though a farre off, from the meaſure of thy Light and Enjoyments; and remember when thou art in the banquetting houſe with thy Beloved, and his banners over thee are Love, *Cant.* the 2, the 4. Minde them which ſtand begging at the doore, knowing that thou waſt once there, though now thou art exalted. Therefore to them that are now poore and naked, O act, Godlike, binding up their wounds, and manifeſt

feſt ſome breathing Roome for their oppreſt Spirits: and if their oppreſſion be ſo great that they cannot ſpeake it out, ſpeake it for them, by declaring what God hath done for thee in the like kinde, and endeavour to Remove their mourning, by mourning over them, and give out the ſoule melting mercy, which is the Cauſe, and if they cannot beare the Raviſhing diſcoveries of Love which thou doſt enjoy by living in Gods heart, then tell them what God did for thee when he firſt tooke thee by the hand. O beloved Friends, this is and ought to be the work of Saints, and this is that *Labour of Love* which the Goſpel calls* for, happy is that heart which is imployed in it.

The ſecond ſort of the people of God, who come under this Reproofe, are ſuch who doe not, nor will not manifeſt owning affections to any, unleſſe it be ſuch as are brought up to, or brought over to live in the ſame forme of worſhip, or practiſe of Ordinance with themſelves: What ever they thinke, they are far from a Goſpel frame of Spirit, and they have forgotten where they firſt met God, or rather where God firſt met them, they have forgotten, and are now apt to *deſpiſe*

* Gal. 6. 2. Joh. 21. 15, 16. 1 Pet. 4. 10.

ſpiſe the day of ſmall things, Zech. the 4 and the 10th. Beloved, if there be any ſuch here, doe you not know the day when you were not brought up to this, nay ſaw nothing in it, peradventure oppoſers of it, and yet you dare not but then ſay that God was with you, and you were with God. O remember that, and remember Gods practiſe, and in Imitation of that manifeſt love and tendernes to any that you ſee any worke of grace upon them, though it be never ſo little. Follow the practiſe of the Spouſe in *Cant.* 8. the 1, 2, and 3 verſes; and doe not as *Jehue* did in a wicked way in another ſence, ſaying, *If you are as I am, give me your hand*; the 2 of the *Kings* the 10th and the 15th.

If any object and ſay, they know no ſuch people, as I here reprove. Beloved, what makes all this oppoſition & ſtrange cenſorious dealings that are between the people of God, who live in particular formes, one ſaying he is of *Paul*, and another of *Apollo*, the 1 of the *Cor.* the 3, and the 3 and 4 verſes. Beloved, without all queſtion there are very precious hearts deare to God amongſt the *Presbyterians* and *Independents*, and them alſo which are falſly called *Anabaptiſts*; and many others which

which are in neither of theſe formes, and yet if a Chriſtian goes to looke upon any of theſe, or either of theſe, and ſee how their affections runnes out to them which are brought up to them in that forme where they are, and what little pittie, kindneſſe or compaſſion is given to them which are not yet brought up. It would make a poor heart in the very thoughts of it bleſſed. Beloved, if any ſuch be here, O Conſider what I have ſaid, and know though it be lawful to ſtand up and contend for truth, yet you muſt doe it with a Goſpel frame of Spirit, that is, Inſtructing thoſe with meeknes that do oppoſe you, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. And be imployed in the practiſe of bearing and forbearing, and if you ſee a poore Soule who is broken under the ſence of his owne unkindneſs, and though he be not come up to you, goe you as farre as may be to him, taking him by the hand, endeavouring to lead him to the knowledge of your Fathers heart. Let it appear to all the world, that you owne Ordinances but as a way to expreſſe love by, and not as a foundation to love upon, & let all ſee that your love is not onely to ſome, but to all the Saints, *Epheſ.* the 1. and the 15. and let the ſame Spirit dwell in you that lived in

Paul, Phil. 3. 15. If any be otherwiſe minded, waite with patience and love, conquering them with kindneſſe, knowing God in time will reveale it, and if you meet with a poore member, that is uncomely, put more comelineſſe upon him, 1 *Cor.* 12. 23. Deare friends, *Paul* tells you 1 *Cor.* 9. 21. *That he became to them that were under the Law, as under the Law, and them that are without Law, as being without Law:* Nay, his Condeſcenſion was more to all, that he might winne ſome; this Scripture was written for our Example, O therefore minde it, and among all, that you minde, thinke of, & remember to give out much love & compaſſion to poore broken Spirits that long for nothing more, then a looke of Gods love. And know, nothing preſents you more God-like then humilitie & love*, and by your practice ſhame & confound the World in their Cenſures of you, who ſay, there is more Cenſorious walking amongſt the Tribes of *Iſrael*, then amongſt them that are not one with them. O be not wanting to love one another, & from a ſence of your oneneſs with Jeſus, ſuffer not your differences of things without, but own Chriſt whereſoever you find him, though it be in a poore Prodigall, who is gone no further then under the reſolu-

ſolutions to Confeſſe his unworthineſſe before God; and know, it is a higher and more glorious imployment to be a bringing home a loſt Sheep, then to ſtay at home and Rejoyce with the ninety and nine, *Luke* 15.5, 6, 7. Herein you preſent God, and follow the practiſe of God: the Lord make you all ſencible of it: But I ſhall ſay no more to this uſe of Reproofe, nor to this Concluſion, but I ſhall ſpeak briefly a word or two to the next in theſe words: *And he ran & fell upon his neck, & kiſſed him.*

Firſt, To the word *ran*, which Implies Gods readines, ſweetnes, and ſwiftneſs to manifeſt grace & kindneſſe to poore broken ſpirits, who are ſencible of their wandrings. The Doctrine from thence is this:

Doct. *There is a ſweet readines in God, in mercy to minde and meet poore wandring hearts in their Returnes to God.*

The truth of which the Scripture doth very plentifully prove; at your leiſure read theſe following, *Iſa.* 61.1, 2. *Pſal.* 86.5. *Jer.* 31.2. Gods readines in mercy to mind and meet poor broken ſpirits, will cleerly appeare, if you mind & conſider theſe things.

Firſt, God doth not onely anſwer their deſires when they come, but he gives them a heart to deſire, & power to come*: *Joh.* 6. 44. And were not the Father ex-

* 1 Joh. 2. 6. 24. 1 Joh. 3. 7. 18.

ceeding ready & willing to beſtow grace and mercy to poore undone Soules, he would never give them a heart to ſeeke for it; he it is that provides an eye and an obje&, and both the mouth and the meat.

Secondly, Power to ſeeke, and the matter ſought: God doth not onely give the poore Creature power to come, and a heart to deſire, but before ever they crave, and can ſpeake out their Requeſt, their Requeſt is anſwered. The power moving the Prodigall to Returne was of God, and when he came to deſire, his Father ran and fell upon his neck, and gave him an anſwer before he could ſpeake.

Thirdly, And when God doth anſwer, he doth not onely grant a Soule what he doth demand, but doth grant much more. The Prodigalls Requeſt was to be a Servant, he made him a Sonne, and if poore broken Spirits doe deſire a looke of Love, and an Enjoyment of Life, they ſhall have the Inrichments of the Everlaſting Love, and Eternall Life. If they beg peace ſutable to what they underſtand, they ſhall Enjoy a peace that *paſſeth all underſtanding*, Phil. the 4. and the 7. Nay, Beloved, Reckon up what you will, or what you can, that is ſutable to the minde of God, the poore wandring

dring Soule in his Returne ſhall be ſure to Enjoy a double and a treble portion, beyond what he can aske or thinke, *Joh.* 14. 2. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. *Iſa.* 64. 4.

Fourthly, Conſider in the laſt place, that which ſutes with the knowledge and experience of all Saints, and the Scripture fully holds forth, *viz.* When poore wandring hearts come to beg mercy and grace, God never puts them off, as having it not ready, but he hath it alwayes ready by him, *Mat.*7. 7, 8, 9, 10. For ſupplyes in that kinde lye alwayes readie by the * Father, as being made up in him, and he made up of them.

* Pſal. 87. 7
Pſal 84. 11
Pſal. 46. 1.
Joh. 1. 16.
Col. 2. 3.

Beloved, Conſider what hath been here ſaid in theſe foure things, and ſee if it doth not fully declare the ready Runnings forth of God in mercy to minde and meet poore wandring hearts in their Returnes. What can be ſaid more to manifeſt his Love and ſweetnes; for he doth not onely anſwer them that aske, but gives them a heart to aske, and anſwers them before they aske, and gives them more then they aske; and whatſoever they deſire, it is ready by him to ſupply them. If you aske me the Reaſons of the Concluſion, they are briefly theſe.

Firſt, God muſt needs be ſwift and

ready to run forth in mercy, because mercy is not onely of him, but it is himselfe,
* 1 John 4. 16. and * therefore I forme my Reason thus; Every thing doth and must needs runne to accomplish that which is most sutable to its owne nature: But to be ready to minde and meet poore wandring hearts, is sutable to Gods nature (*Ergo*)...

Second Reason, Mercy and grace is not onely one with God, but it is the great
* Mich. 7. 18. delight of God*, he takes much joy and
Isa 42. 1. content in shewing favour, and in manifesting Love to poore broken and undone Spirits, who in their owne eyes appeare as objects no way sutable to Love.

Third Reason, He is not onely one with it, & secondly, delights in it, but thirdly,
Psa. 50. 15 he brings much glory to himselfe by it:
Psal. 52. 9. grace appeares Eminently glorious, in
Isa. 43. 7. manifesting it selfe in poore worthlesse
Rom. 4. 2. and graceles hearts: therefore it is Gods
1 Cor. 1. 26. 30, 31. way to manifest power in weakness, to
Psal. 51. 4. discover light in darknes, to answer unkindness with great kindness, and to declare his faithfulness to them who have dealt unfaithfully with him: herein God appeares a God, and not Man, and by it all flesh are, and will be forced with great acknowledgement to give glory to him. Beloved friends, I should now make use of

of this Concluſion, there being many ſweet refreſhments held out in it to poor weak and worthles Spirits, who are a returning to the Father thorough a ſence of their own wandrings. But I ſhall ſpeak briefly a word or two of the next words; ſo make uſe altogether, having ſpoken ſo largely already to the former words.

He fell on his necke and kiſſed him.

Theſe words are a Metaphoricall Expreſſion, but it holds forth aboundance of ſweetnes, as to the dealings of God with us. The word *falling*, implies the great Condeſcention of God to us; the words, *upon his necke and kiſſing him*, holds forth the ſweet Love, familiaritie, and communion with God. But to both theſe wee ſhall ſpeake very briefly; And as to the word *falling*, which as I told you holds forth Gods great Condeſcention to poor Creatures, in his diſpencing mercy and grace, you may cleerly underſtand it, that if you doe but Conſider, Firſt, what God is; and ſecondly, what God does; and thirdly, to whom he doth it: As to God, * he is one ſingle Simple and infinite beeing, in whom all varieties of glory and good lives, from which fountain all good comes, unto which glory no addition can be made, all ſtands in need of him, but none

* Pſal. 95. 3, 4, 5, 6. Deut. 33. 26. 29. Pſal. 97. 9. Dan. 2. 47. Job 35. 7, 8

none can give a ſupply to him, he hath all in himſelfe, and there is nothing out of him any thing, but as it is made ſomething by what flowes from him. All power, Love, Life, glory, and Light, lives in him; he is over all, in all, and above all; this and much more might be ſaid of the Father. But the tongue of Men and Angels are not able to declare it.

Secondly, Conſider what he doth in his Diſpenſing grace and mercy to poore undone hearts; in which deſcription many things might be ſaid, but briefly thus; He is pleaſed to make *Slaves Sonnes, and to Crowne them who in all their Lives endeavour to croſſe him: And as to Men he appeares to Cloud himſelfe, to Cloath them, and makes them who are Tyrants and Traytors, to become Kings & Princes, and to make them his boſome Companions, for whom he is willing to doe all, and from whom he will hide nothing: and Beloved, minde in what way God is pleaſed to doe it; he ſtoops to the weaknes and low capacity of the Creature, and doth communicate things ſutable to their capacity and ſpirit, bearing as you may ſee, *Mark.* 4. 33. And he never comes, but he brings a power to beare aſwell as matter to be borne, a Capacity receiving as well

*Rom. 5. 6 8. 10. Gal 4. 5. Ezek. 16. 5, 6. Epheſ. 2. 3. Revel. 5. 9, 10. Joh. 15. 15. 2 Cor. 5. 21 Phil. 2. 7, 8.

wel as matter to be received. And further, take notice that all this he doth by bringing ſtrength into weaknes, and manifeſting Light in darknes, & cauſing the glory of his Love to ſhine & breake forth in our poore baſe loathſome forme, thorough which he doth breake downe all the corrupt fabrick that lives in mens fancies, & there places the Authoritie of his owne beames of Love & ſweetnes, wiſdome and meeknes, by which the Creature becomes a partaker of the Divine matter, 2 *Pet.* 1.

Thirdly, Conſider for whom he doth it, it is to a people that are altogether worthleſſe *, they have not onely been ignorant of him, but all along have endeavoured to bring diſhonour to him; they are not onely one with, and carry on deſignes for the Power & Prince of darkneſſe, but they ſhut their eyes againſt the tenders of Light and Love; As you may ſee, *Joh.* 1. 11. & *Joh.* 3. 19, 20. They are ſo farre from being objects to attract and draw on Love, that they are altogether loathſome lying in their bloud, *Ezek.* the 16. the 5 and 6 verſes. Truly it is Endles to reckon up the Creatures nothingneſſe. Whatſoever may be ſaid of an Enemy, of a Traytor, of a Runnagate that ſpends all, and deſpiſeth every thing, and mindeth nothing

* Iſa. 61. 1, 2 Iſa. 65. 1, 2, 3. Epheſ. 2.

nothing but what may diſhonour God: Theſe are they whom God doth all this for, and that he waiteth all the day long for, and whom he in mercy finds, meets, and ſeekes, before they ſeeke him, *Iſa.* the 65. the 1 and 2. Nay he is pleaſed not onely to doe ſo, but to wooe us and beſeech us to be reconciled to him, the 2 of the *Cor.* the 5. and the 20. Beloved, if you doe ſeriouſly weigh what hath been ſaid in theſe 3 things, you will ſee how much God Condeſcends to us in diſpenſing mercy and grace to poore wandring Spirits, and it may fitly be Expreſſed in this word *falling*, which holds forth the great Condeſcenſion of God, as well as the familiaritie of God: *And he fell upon his neck and kiſſed him.* Beloved, you may obſerve from thence this Concluſion:

Doct. *That it is Gods way to bring all poore hearts, upon whom he caſts his favour, into a friendly and a neere familiaritie and communion with himſelfe,* Joh. 15. 15.

Jonathan and *Davids* love and affection and neere communion, was never more Expreſt then when they fell upon each others neck, 1 *Sam.* 20. Wherein did *Joſephs* love appeare more to his Brethren, then when he fell upon their necks, to manifeſt his love by weeping over them,

and

and kiſſing of them, *Gen.* 45. 14, 15. But farre beyond all this, doth God manifeſt his Love and ſweetneis to poore broken hearts, falling upon the neck of the ſoule, kiſſing and embracing it, and bringing it into a deare and neere friendly communion with himſelfe: at your leiſure reade theſe Scriptures following, *Cant.* 2. 4, 5. *Cant.* 5. 1. *Iſa.* 61. 10. *Iſa.* 62. 5.

Now Beloved, I ſhould further illuſtrate this Concluſion, and ſpeak more largely to it, being that which is worthy of our minding, and worth our beleeving and embracing. I know all hearts that have taſted of this Love and Life, after the bitter pangs and throws of ſorrow & death, through a ſenſe of their wandrings from God, will freely acknowledge this, and declare a hundred times more then I can here expreſſe: But I having ſpoken largely of that which relates to this, in the former Concluſion, I ſhall briefly ſpeake a word or two of the Uſe of this and the other Concluſion, and ſo conclude.

The firſt is an Uſe of Information, to Informe us from what hath been ſaid in relation to theſe three laſt things, *Viz. Gods ready running forth in mercy to minde and meet poore wandring ſpirits in their returnes to him*; which is from the word

Ran.

Ran. 2. *The great condiſcention of God in diſpenſing grace and mercy, and in entertaining poore wandring ſoules,* and that is implied in the word *Fell.* 3. *The ſweet communion, and near and dear diſcoveries of love that are given out from the Father in their returnes,* implied in theſe words, *He fell upon his neck and kiſſed him:* from whence we might obſerve many Conſectaries, and Concluſions, that might eminently preſent God in his dealings with us, and the high exaltation of the creature, who is enriched with theſe enjoyments. But I ſhall paſſe over all theſe, and make brief and plaine uſe of them, according to the dictates of God to my owne ſpirit, and that is to informe us of theſe things.

1. Of the great miſtakes of poor broken ſpirits, they apprehending by the Reaſon of their owne ſin, and unſuitableneſſe, that they have ſo provoked the Lord, that mercy will not be eaſily gained. O remember from what hath been ſaid, that God is not onely ſweet, but ſwift in diſpenſing mercy, he runs, mercy being not onely one with him, but the delight of him. Beloved, take notice, that he is more ready to imbrace you, then you are to beg imbracements; and though you can hardly goe, yet he runs; experience

rience proves, that he that acts in a delight is more ready then he that acts to gaine a delight. O it is the joy and content of the father, thus to befriend poore broken ſpirits in their returnes, who have dealt unkindly and unfriendly with him. 2. It is to Informe ſuch hearts, who through an apprehenſion of Gods highneſſe, glory, and greatneſſe, apprehended with a ſenſe of their weakneſſe and nothingneſſe, apprehended ſo great a diſtance, that they thinke it is impoſſible that ever God and they ſhould cloſe: they ſee themſelves unable to come up to God, and they being ſo unkind and unſutable, that they dare not conclude he will come downe to them, and upon that accompt rather ſit downe fearing and trembling before him, then expreſſing faith in him. O know that it is Gods way, as in mercy to run forth in diſpenſing grace, in great readineſſe to meet us, ſo it is his way and delight to condiſcend to us: he it is that doth manifeſt ſtrength in weakneſſe, fullneſſe in emptineſſe, light in darkneſſe. O therefore let the apprehenſion of what hath been ſaid, take us off from all diſcouragements, as to our entertainment with God; and let us know and beleeve, though we cannot come up to God, God will

will come downe to us, and it is not our weaknes nor wants, that can or will hinder a poor nothing ſpirit from being ſomthing in him, who is all in himſelf, & all to us. 3. It is to Inform us of the ſweet inrichments that poor wandring ſoules injoy in their returnes, God falls upon the neck, and kiſſes them; that is to ſay, they are entertained, and brought into a near, and dear fellowſhip and communion with himſelfe. O what can a ſoule deſire more, then to be made Gods boſome friend, his daily acquaintance, nay, his near and dear darling, unto whom he will give out kiſſes and imbraces, and be daily his delight.

The ſecond uſe is an uſe of Comfort, and Conſolation to all poor wandring ſpirits who are earneſt in their Returnes to meet the Lord, yet their apprehenſion of the great diſtance from him, and the conſideration how much they are beneath and below him, doth exceedingly diſcourage them. O beloved, if this be any of your conditions, take notice for your comfort, what Scripture and Experience here declares. It is not our diſtance to him, or lowneſſe before him, or unſutableneſſe to him, that can hinder his diſpenſing of Kindneſſe, Love, and

Grace

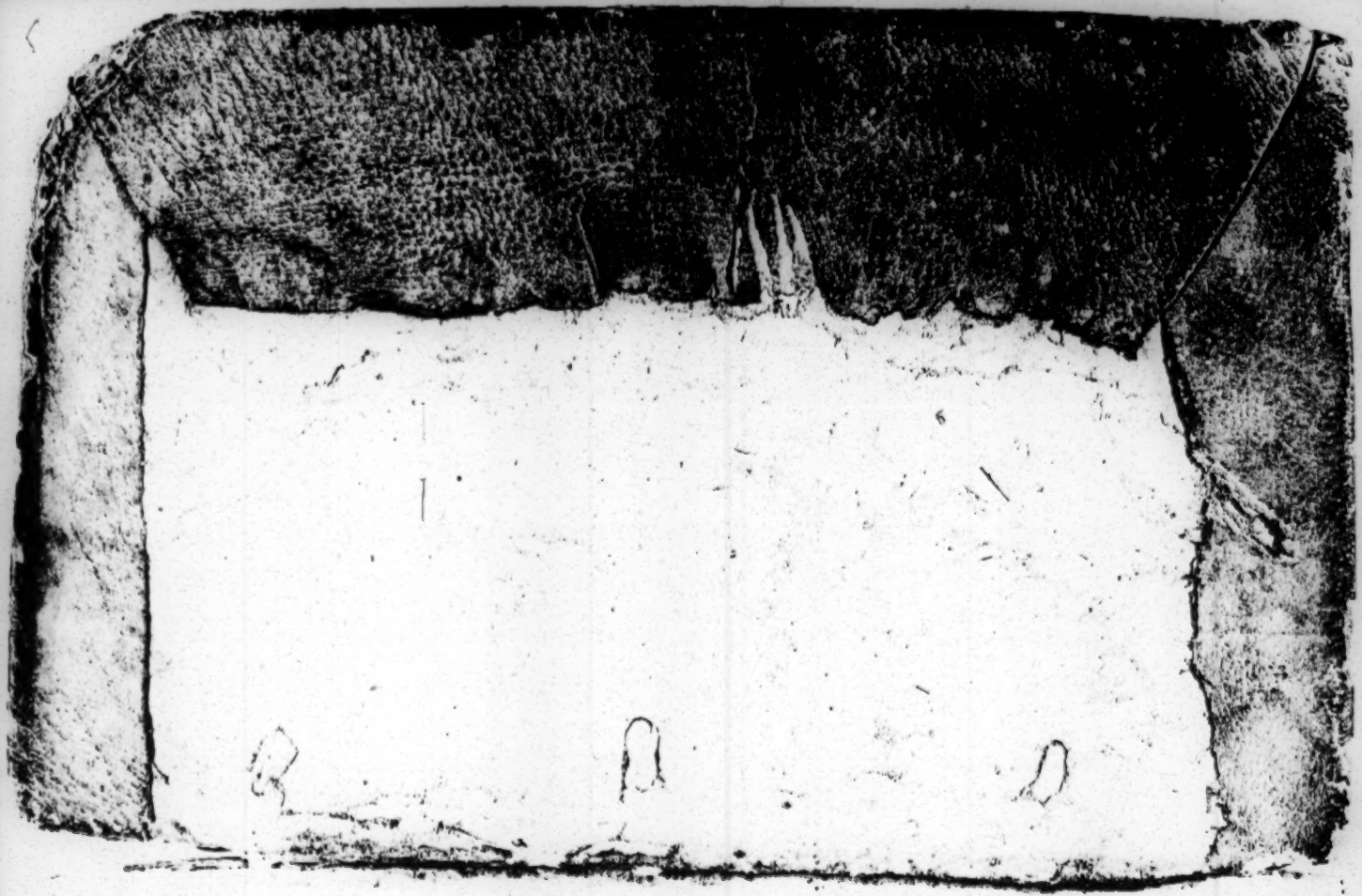
Grace to us, * and he will not goe, but runne, and stand when we fall, but he will fall on us that we may stand by him, and not onely entertaine our Requeſt when we come begging to injoy relation to him, but he will enrich us with a near and dear communion with himſelfe, falling upon our necks, and kiſſing us. O Beloved, I beg of God to give you power to beleive it, and as cheerfully to entertaine that, as that entertaines you. But no more of this Uſe, but a word or two of Exhortation, and ſo conclude.

*Iſa. 1.18. Iſa. 38.7. Iſa. 44.21, 22. Iſa. 43.25. Mat.11.28.

3. And laſtly, Theſe are to exhort all ſoules that are againe returned, to conſider what hath been ſaid, and ſeing God is ſo tranſcendently carried out in mercy to mind us, let us be tender and carefull to owne him; and know, as grace tranſcends ſin, ſo ſin becomes tranſcendently ſinfull, in tranſgreſſing and neglecting the tenders of grace. At your leiſure carefully and candidly read theſe Scriptures, *Heb.* 2.3. *Heb.* 6.6. *Heb.* 10.26,27. O they are ſad ſayings, I beg of the Lord that you and I may never be brought to juſtifie the truth by woful experience. O walk cloſe with God, and live up to his Loves, death is near them that live below that, doth God run with great readineſſe in

mercy

mercy to meet and mind us? (O) what cauſe have we to run out to him, & keep neer him when he comes? Is he pleaſed to fall upon our necks? let us fall at his foot, is he pleaſed to kiſs us? let us chearfully imbrace him, and what is commanded by him. Beloved friends, I beg of the Lord to make you ſenſible of what hath been ſaid, and not to mind the ſcorns of the world, nor the undervaluing expreſſions of ſome who ſeemingly profeſs God, as to a careful endeavour to walk cloſe with God; know it is not men, but God that you muſt mind, and conſider from the conſideration of the ſweet entertainment that poor ſouls in their returns to God, find with God; conſider, I ſay, what duty* that cals for, and know our time is ſhort, and our life too little to ſpeak out his love. There is much more to be ſaid to theſe Concluſions, and to this Uſe, but I ſhall ſay no more, but the Lord hand over the knowledge of this truth to you, from his own heart, that by the knowledge of it you may abide with him, from his abiding with you, which is the earneſt prayer of him that hath declared this, from what experience God hath made him find in his miſtakes in wandring, and from his unexpected entertainment in his returne.

*Heb. 2.3. Pſ. 116.12. Rom. 12.1,2 Tit. 2.11,12. 1 Jo. 2.3,3. 2 Pet. 3.11.

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